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A

HISTORY

OF THE

POLITICAL LIFE

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT.

VOL. IV.

36747

HISTORY

OF THE

POLITICAL LIFE

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT;

INCLUDING SOME ACCOUNT OF

THE TIMES IN WHICH HE LIVED.

By JOHN GIFFORD, Esq.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

NEC SIBI, SED TOTI GENITUM SE CREDERE MUNDO.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

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view to the impeachment of Ministers---Mr. Pitt's speech ---Motion rejected by a great majority---Mr. Fox moves a series of resolutions, condemning the conduct of Ministers ---His speech in support of them---Accuses Ministers of purposely delaying overtures for peace, until they could not be accepted by the French---Pleads the cause of France with great zeal and ability---Censures the instructions given to Mr. Wickham, and justifies the objections of the Directory---The inconsistency and weakness of his arguments exposed---He insists on the necessity of a change of Ministers; but declares, that he never will accept of a place himself, without a retractation of all the leading principles and maxims which had been adopted by the government and the House---Mr. Pitt answers him —Declares that peace has been his constant wish, and that the war has interfered with all his favourite plans of economy and finance---Comments on the inconsistency of Mr. Fox---Explains the difference between himself and Mr. Burke, respecting the object of the war---Confutes Mr. Fox's charge of insincerity, in the attempt to open a negotiation for peace---Resolutions negatived by 216 votes against 42—Parliament dissolved—Military operations on the Continent—Renewal of hostilities on the Rhine—Amount of the respective forces of the Austrians and French, at the opening of the campaign—Object of the French, on the invasion of Germany—Battle on the Sieg—Battle of Altenkirchen—Retreat of the Austrians ---The Archduke Charles joins the army, defeats the French, and drives them back behind the Lahn---General Kray, with 11,000 men, beats 25,000 French, under Kleber---The French retreat to Dusseldorf---Operations on the Upper Rhine---Wurmser detached to Italy with 30,000 men---Superiority of the French---Moreau takes the fort of Kehl—Cowardice of the Suabian troops—Moreau crosses the Rhine, and enters Germany, with 80,000 men---Defeats the Austrians under Latour, on the

Murg---The Archduke takes the command of the troops on the Upper Rhine---Battle of Ettlingen---Retreat of the Imperialists---Battle of Mettingen---The French advance into Bavaria---Masterly plan of the Archduke---He marches against Jourdan's army---Jourdan retreats---The Archduke prevents his junction with Moreau---Defeats him at Kornach---Jourdan's army is dispersed, and driven beyond the Rhine---Operations on the Danube---Moreau defeated---Peace between France and Bavaria---Moreau retreats---Displays great skill and ability---Imprudent conduct of the Austrian Generals---The French re-cross the Rhine---Siege and recapture of Fort Kehl by the Austrians---Campaign in Italy---Relative forces of the Belligerent powers---Battles of Montenotte and Montelezino, Dego, and Vico---Retreat of the Allies---Peace between France and Sardinia---Retreat of the Austrians---The French cross the Po---Battle of Lodi—The French pass the Mincio—Enter Leghorn—Besiege Mantua—Wurmser arrives in Italy—Siege of Mantua raised—Austrians defeated in various actions—Wurmser retreats into the Tyrol—Battle of Rovoredo—Action at Bassano—Wurmser arrives at Mantua—Peace between Naples and France—A fresh army of Austrians, under Generals Alvinzy and Davidovich, enter Italy—Battle of Fonteviva—Battle of Arcole, and retreat of Alvinzy---Battle near Verona---Defeat of the Austrians at Rivoli and Corona---They retreat into the Tyrol---Mantua surrendered to the French ---Peace between France and the Pope---Termination of the campaign---Examination into the causes of the defeat of the Austrians, and the success of the French---Treachery of the Austrian officers---Falsehood of Buonaparte's reports to the Directory---Loss of either army during the campaign—Impolitic restrictions imposed on the Austrian Commanders, by the Aulic Council of War—Evil effects of such a system.

THE

POLITICAL

LIFE OF MR. PITT.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

State of Jacobinism in England---Smothered for a time, but destined to break out with additional violence---The boldness of the Jacobins increases with the success of their brethren in France---The London Corresponding Society---Send delegates to different parts of the Kingdom---Rapid progress of disaffection---The doctrines of Jacobinism alluring to the poor and the idle---Cautious conduct of the Minister---Convention at Edinburgh---Their views, their objects, and proceedings---Adopt French forms---Meeting of Parliament---King's Speech---Address moved by Lord Cliffden, and seconded by Sir Peter Burrell---Eloquent speech of Lord Mornington---Acknowledgments of the French Jacobins, that they were the aggressors, and brought on the war---Speeches of Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan---They impute the cruelties of the French Government to the despotism of the Monarchy---Falsehood of this imputation proved---The attack of foreign powers assigned as a second cause of these enormities---The enormities proved to exist before the attack began---Pacific disposition of France *asserted*---Her aggressive spirit

distinctly *proved*---Mr. Fox abuses the Allies of Great Britain---Affirms that Louis the Fourteenth attempted to overthrow the established Church of England---This fact denied in his late History of James the Second---Disasters of the Allies magnified, and their victories depreciated---Speeches of Mr. Dundas and Mr. Windham---Speech of Mr. Pitt; he justifies an interference in the internal affairs of France---Represents the destruction of the Jacobin system as necessary for the peace of Europe---Impracticability of peace with the Revolutionary Government---Instability of that Government inferred---Reasons for the invalidity of such inference adduced---Negotiation with France, at this period, shewn to be impracticable---Mr. Fox's amendment rejected by a majority of 218---Address carried---Similar Address moved in the House of Lords---Debate thereon---Amendment proposed by Lord Guildford---Ridiculous argument advanced in support of it---Negatived by ninety-seven votes against twelve---Motion of Lord Stanhope for acknowledging the French Republic---He pronounces a panegyric on the French Revolution---His ignorance of its history demonstrated---Declares himself a Jacobin---Can find no one to second his motion---Legality of the sentences of the Scotch Judges on Muir and Palmer, for sedition, questioned by Mr. Adam---His motion and speech on the subject in the House of Commons---His general principle contrary to general practice---His motion rejected by 126 votes against 31---Mr. Adam's motion for a revisal of the sentence on Muir and Palmer---Opposed by the Lord Advocate---Answered by Mr. Pitt---Rejected by the House---Third motion of Mr. Adam on the defects in Scottish Laws---Negatived by the House---Discussion of the same questions in the House of Lords---Subsidiary Treaty with the King of Sardinia---Censured by the Opposition---Maiden speech of Mr. Canning---His liberal notions of National Policy---His masterly character of the French Government---The treaty sanctioned by the House---The Opposition com-

plain of the increase of the army---That measure defended by Mr. Pitt---Mr. Pitt opens the budget---Taxes upon gloves and upon births and burials repealed---New duty on spirits, bricks, tiles, glass, paper, and on the indentures and admission of Attornies---Bill to prohibit the remittance of money to France---King's message to Parliament on the landing of the Hessian Troops---Mr. Grey's motion on the subject---Folly of discussing abstract principles---Motion negatived---King's message on the increase of the army---Legality of voluntary contributions for the defence of the country---Denied by Mr. Sheridan ---Debates on the question---Arguments of Mr. Sheridan confuted by Mr. Pitt---Opposition accused by their late Leaders of favouring the views of the enemy---Splenetic invectives of Mr. Sheridan---Discussion renewed by Mr. Francis---Mr. Pitt's speech on the question---He defends voluntary contributions on the grounds of law, of precedent, and of policy---Taxes the Opposition with an invasion of the Rights of the Subject---Bill for carrying the measure into effect passes without a division---Motion of Mr. Harrison for the abolition of certain places and pensions, and for imposing a tax upon others---Injustice of such a proposal, and absurdity of the reasoning used in support of it---Proofs of the economical arrangements adopted by Mr. Pitt produced by Mr. Rose---Mr. Fox supports the motion, but opposes the proposal for taxing sinecure places---Mr. Pitt's reply---Motion rejected by 117 against 50---Bill for enabling the King to employ the French Emigrants---Opposed by Mr. Sheridan, who deprecates a system of retaliation---Justice and necessity of such system maintained---Mr. Whitbread objects to the employment of Roman Catholics who have taken no Test ---Mr. Fox's speech---He prefers the Revolutionary Government of France to the Ancient Monarchy---Denies the right of interference which he had formerly main-

tained, and condemns the system of retaliation---Tendency of his speech considered---His insincerity proved---He is answered by Mr. Burke and Mr. Dundas---Mr. Burke defends the *Lex Talionis*---Bill passed---Marquis of Lansdowne's motion on the subject of peace---Rejected on a division by 103 against 13---Similar motion by Mr. Whitbread---Opposed by Mr. Pitt---Negatived by 138 to 26---Another motion in the House of Lords on the same subject---Rejected by 96 to 9---General Fitzpatrick's motion in favour of La Fayette---Opposed by Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Pitt---Rejected by the House---Major Maitland proposes an inquiry into the causes of the disasters at Dunkirk and at Toulon---Explanations of Ministers on the subject---Expedition to Dunkirk censured---Motion for an inquiry negatived---Subsidiary Treaty with Prussia discussed in both Houses---Extraordinary motion of Earl Stanhope---His horrible perversion of Scripture to prove Kings a curse upon mankind---The Lord Chancellor refuses to read the preamble of his resolution---Observations on the object and nature of the freedom of Debate, and on Parliamentary Libels---Lord Grenville moves to expunge Earl Stanhope's resolution from the Journals of the House---Voted unanimously---Lord Lauderdale's motion on the subject---Resisted by a motion for adjournment.

[1794.] The zeal, activity, and perseverance, displayed by the loyal associations, had silenced, for a while, the voice of disaffection, and had stilled the clamours of revolt. But where jacobinism has taken deep root in the mind, it is not easily eradicated; and, though fear or policy

may conceal the latent principle from general observation, or prevent any immediate attempt to bring it into action, it will still continue to operate, in secret, and will, sooner or later, burst forth into an open manifestation of all its malignant and destructive qualities. — The British jacobins, on the first successful exposure of their flagitious designs, had, probably by the advice either of their avowed leaders, or of those private friends, who, while they occasionally censured their violent proceedings, spared no pains to promote the success of their cause, assumed an hypocritical tone of moderation which their hearts disavowed, and sought to shelter themselves under a professed limitation of their object to plans of constitutional reform, totally foreign from their views.

But men, who were adverse to every principle of subordination, and impatient of control, were ill calculated to submit, for any length of time, either to the restraints of prudence, or to the shackles of hypocrisy. Their audacity seems, indeed, to have increased with the triumphs of the parent jacobins of France, and every additional act of atrocity committed by the predominating faction in that wretched country, gave, to their servile imitators in England, a fresh ground of confidence, and a new stimulus to exertion. The London

Corresponding Society, which may be considered as the grand revolutionary planet of Great Britain, and the minor clubs, which may be regarded as its satellites, renewed their mischievous activity, and pursued their destructive course, without opposition, as without disguise. For some months, delegates had been openly employed, as missionaries, to circulate their pernicious principles throughout the Provinces, and to augment the number of their adherents. Delusive and visionary as their theories were, and easy as it was, to a cultivated and well-informed mind, to detect their fallacy, and to overthrow their sandy foundation, they contained certain abstract propositions, wonderfully alluring to the poor, the profligate, and the idle, who required no great eloquence to persuade them, that riches and power were the common property of every individual of the community, and that no man had a right to be richer or greater than his neighbour. It is not surprising, therefore, that these emissaries of jacobinism, who were, generally, men of active dispositions, and sanguine minds, should make numerous converts to their sect, or that the flame of discord, which had been smothered for a time, should break out with added violence.

Government, meanwhile, though appa-

rently passive, was by no means inattentive to the rapid progress of disaffection. The Minister knew, that, by preferring judicial charges against the agents of sedition, without the ability to substantiate them by legal proof, he would only afford an opportunity to his political opponents to renew their invectives, and impart, to the disaffected, fresh confidence and courage. He wisely, therefore, resolved to let them proceed until they should supply such evidence as would convince the country, and satisfy a jury, of their guilt.

In Edinburgh, the seditious had proceeded to reduce their principles to practice, and had actually, in October, 1793, holden that kind of *convention* which the President of the French Convention had so fondly anticipated in his answer to one of the English addresses. This meeting was attended by delegates from the London Corresponding Society, and from other societies of the same description in different parts of England and Ireland. The London Corresponding Society, acting with considerable prudence, restricted its delegates to its original *avowed* object—the obtaining, by lawful means, universal suffrage and annual Parliaments; but, that they might not be too much fettered in their operations, they instructed them, at the same time, to enforce the duty of the people to

resist any act of the Legislature repugnant to the original principles of the constitution, as every attempt would be to prohibit associations for the purpose of reform. The Edinburgh Convention adopted all the forms, names, and proceedings, of the French Jacobin Clubs, with such difference and omissions only as their peculiar circumstances rendered necessary. The members hailed each other by the republican denomination of *citizen;* they divided themselves into *sections; appointed* committees of *organization,* of *instruction,* of *finance,* of *secrecy,* and of *emergency;* called their meetings *sittings;* granted *honours of sittings,* and dated their proceedings in *the first year of the British Convention, one and indivisible.*—They, at first, assumed the distinctive appellation of the *General Convention of the Friends of the People;* but they afterwards took the name of the *British Convention of the delegates of the People, associated to obtain universal suffrage and annual Parliaments.** They adopted means for assembling the delegates, at any time, when it should be deemed necessary, in consequence of any measures of precaution or coercion which the government might adopt, for the Societies to act, and they were fully prepared to carry their doctrine of resistance into effect.

* *The Trial of William Skirving, Secretary to the British Convention, before the High Court of Justiciary, for Sedition.*

When they were thus emboldened, by their increased numbers, openly to avow their designs, the government thought it time to interrupt their proceedings. On the fifth and sixth of December, the magistrates of Edinburgh repaired to two of their places of meeting, where they seized the papers, and took the secretary, and some of the leading members, into custody. Three of these were afterwards brought to trial, William Skirving, the secretary, and two of the delegates from the London Corresponding Society, Maurice Margarot and Joseph Gerald, before the High Court of Justiciary in Scotland, and, being all found guilty, they were sentenced to be transported for fourteen years.*

Such was the state of the public mind when Parliament met, on the 21st of January, for the dispatch of business; and never did they meet at a more interesting period; at a time when more subjects of great importance pressed upon their attention, and called for their most serious deliberation, and their most solemn discussion; or at a time when every motive of public virtue, of genuine patriotism, more imperatively required an union of sentiment and

* Skirving was tried on the 6th of January; Margarot on the 13th and 14th of the same month; and Gerald on the 10th, 13th, and 14th, of March, 1794.

of effort, and the sacrifice of every private, every party feeling to the protection of that venerable fabric of the constitution, which was now threatened with destruction, by the inveterate malignity of foreign foes, and by the unnatural treachery of domestic traitors. Most justly did the King remind them, in his speech, that we were engaged in a contest, on the issue of which depended the maintenance of our constitution, our laws, and our religion—and the security of all. His Majesty briefly recapitulated the advantages obtained by the allies, in the last campaign, which had, notwithstanding the recent successes of the enemy, proved highly beneficial to the common cause. Our enemies, it was observed, had derived the means of temporary exertion from a system which had enabled them to dispose, arbitrarily, of the lives and property of a numerous people, and which openly violated every restraint of justice, humanity, and religion; but those efforts, productive as they necessarily had been, of internal discontent and confusion, in France, had also tended rapidly to exhaust the natural and real strength of that country. The King expressed his regret at the necessary continuance of the war, but remarked, that he should ill-consult the essential interests of his people, if he were desirous of peace on

any grounds but such as might provide for the independence and security of Europe; the attainment of which ends was still obstructed by the prevalence of a system in France, equally incompatible with the happiness of that country, and with the tranquillity of all other nations. An attack had been made upon us, and our allies, founded on principles which tended to destroy all property, to subvert the laws and religion of every civilized nation, and to introduce, universally, that wild and destructive system of rapine, anarchy, and impiety, the effects of which, as they had already been manifested in France, furnished a dreadful, but useful, lesson to the present age and to posterity. It only remained for us, then, to persevere in our united exertions; their discontinuance or relaxation could hardly procure even a short interval of delusive repose, and could never terminate in security or peace. Impressed, as we were, with the necessity of defending all that was most dear to us, and relying, as we might with confidence, on the valour and resources of the nation, on the combined efforts of so large a part of Europe, and, above all, on the incontestible justice of our cause, we were called upon to render our conduct a contrast to that of our enemies, and, by cultivating and practising the principles of humanity and

the duties of religion, to endeavour to merit the continuance of the Divine favour and protection, which had been so eminently experienced in these kingdoms.

A long debate ensued on the motion for the usual address, which was made by Lord Cliffden, and seconded by Sir Peter Burrell. The justice and policy of the war were enforced on the one hand and denied on the other; and the French found in the British Senate more able, if not more zealous, advocates than their own Convention could supply. The defence of Ministers was undertaken by Lord Mornington, in a speech of considerable length, of the merits of which no brief analysis could convey a competent idea; it was delivered with great and impressive eloquence; but the beauty of the composition constituted the least part of its excellence,—for it was filled with the most accurate and interesting detail of facts, the luminous arrangement, happy adaptation, and irresistible strength, of which were admirably calculated to convey the clearest and fullest information, and to carry conviction to every mind that was open to receive it. Happily for the cause of truth, the contentions, which had already arisen between the rival chiefs of the French revolution, had, by producing reciprocal criminations, supplied the strongest and least

suspicious proofs of the injustice and iniquity of them all; and of the necessity to which their enemies had been driven, by their conduct, to take up arms in their own defence.—Of these proofs Lord Mornington made the best possible use.—He exhibited Robespierre and Brissot to the House in the act of accusing each other, for having produced the war both against the powers of the Continent and against England.* He shewed, from their acknowledgments, that the war was forced upon us, and that, therefore, it was as unavoidable as it was just.—He proved, from the speeches of the leading members of the Executive Government, the malignant hatred entertained, and cherished

* One of the principal charges against Brissot, on his trial, was "the proposal from the Diplomatic Committee, by the organ of Brissot, to declare war abruptly against England, war against Holland, war against all the Powers which had not yet declared themselves." During his trial, it was remarked by Chaumette, in the Jacobin Club, which was the real seat of government at this time, "Every patriot has a right to accuse, in this place, the man who voted the war; and the blood which has been shed in the Republic, and without the Republic, in consequence of it, shall be their proofs and their reasons." Robespierre, too, in his report, on the 17th of November, 1793, says, "With what base hypocrisy the traitors insisted on certain *pretended* insults offered to our ambassador!" Brissot, on the other hand, retorted on his rivals, "Who," says he, "has been the author of this war? The anarchists *only*, and yet they make it a crime in us."

with incredible pains, against this country, and the fixed determination to exert every effort to subvert her constitution, and to achieve her ruin.* He drew a correct and striking picture of the actual state of France, enduring all the complicated miseries which were the natural offsprings of the principles which gave them birth.—He insisted on the incompatibility of those principles, when applied, as they were, to practical purposes, with the peace, happiness, or security, of other states. And his Lordship deduced from these facts, and from these obser-

* On the 16th of October, 1793, when Saint Just proposed a decree for apprehending all the English then in France, and for confiscating their property, he concluded his report with this declaration, "We will give our friendly assistance to the people of England, in order to enable them to rid themselves of Kings." On the Evacuation of Toulon, Barrere exclaimed, "The day is not distant when the people of England shall recollect that they were once republicans, and that it was an usurpation which reduced them again to the calamitous condition of subjects living under a Monarchy." And on the 21st of September, 1793, on proposing the means of destroying the commerce and naval power of Great Britain, he observed, "Carthage was the torment of Italy, Carthage was destroyed by Rome; London is the torment of Europe; London is an ulcer which wastes the strength of the Continent; London is a political excrescence which liberty is bound to destroy; may England be ruined! May England be annihilated! Such ought to be the concluding article of every *revolutionary* decree of the National Convention of France!"

nations, the wisdom and the necessity of continuing the war with all possible vigour and exertion, as the only means of reducing the gigantic power of revolutionary France, and of ensuring a safe and honourable peace.

His Lordship was answered by Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Fox, who admitted his facts, but disputed his conclusions.—These singular politicians, instead of tracing the effects of the French revolution to their obvious causes, could descry, in the atrocious acts of its founders, nothing but the consequence of a long established despotism, which had so far degraded and debased human nature as to render it unfit for the exercise of its rights when they were recovered; and, in their opinion, the *only* lesson which they *ought* to teach, was a ten-fold horror of that system which, in its ruin, as well as in its existence, was the curse of mankind. If there were any truth in the novel principle here laid down, it would apply generally to all nations in which a despotic government had been changed, by a revolution, for a free constitution; in all such cases, the same, or similar acts of atrocity, the destruction of property, the murder of the rich, the annihilation of religious worship, and the most boundless tyranny and insatiate cruelty, in the new governors, would be wit-

nessed: but the reverse of this is proved by history to have been the fact. Did such effects follow the emancipation of the Dutch from the iron yoke of Philip of Spain? No, though the despotic government of Philip differed as much from the mild sway of Louis XVI. as the reign of Tiberius did from that of Titus; the Dutch revolution produced no such consequences as flowed from the revolution in France. The Swiss, too, when they shook off the despotic authority of Austria, disgraced not *their* country by acts of impiety, cruelty, and injustice. But neither the Dutch nor the Swiss, nor any other nation, whose exploits are recorded in history, promulgated such wild and visionary theories, adopted such loose and destructive principles, as the French, and, *therefore*, and not in consequence of the pre-existing form of government, was the territory of France polluted with the blood of it inhabitants, and its sanguinary rulers degraded by acts which have no parallel in history.

But, as if conscious that the cause which they had thus assigned, for these enormities, was not adequate to the imputed effect, these partisans thought proper to invent another operative cause of all this mischief; in the attack of the surrounding States, which, according to them, had goaded on a people, sud-

denly possessed of power, which they had not learnt to manage, into a state of fury and desperation.—But, it must be remembered, that the surrounding States were not the assailants, and the state of fury had existed before the state of war.—The ferocious spirit, which the principles of the revolution were so well calculated to engender and to cherish, had manifested itself in acts of atrocious cruelty, and of treasonable outrage, previous to the declaration of war against Austria.—Antecedent to that period, they had perpetrated the cold-blooded assassination of Foulon and Berthier; had degraded their nature by the public exhibition of the heart of the murdered De Launay, in the streets of the capital;—by their treasonable and sanguinary attack on the Royal Palace at Versailles; — by the *cannibal* procession which ensued;—and by numberless other acts of fury and of blood.

Pursuing the same line of argument, they had the presumption to assert, in direct contradiction to the most notorious facts, that there was not a party in France that was not inclined to avoid a rupture with Great Britain!—They accused Lord Mornington of endeavouring to prove that France was the aggressor, rather by words than by actions; though his Lordship had not made a single assertion, without addu-

cing the most positive and satisfactory proofs in support of it.—They next laboured to fix the charge of aggression upon their own country. The hostile disposition of Great Britain, they insisted, was displayed in the countenance given to the treaty of Pilnitz; (to which, it has been already shewn, our Ministers gave no countenance nor encouragement whatever);—in withdrawing our Minister from Paris, (who was accredited only to the King of France, and who could not have remained there, after his deposition and imprisonment, without affording the sanction of his Sovereign to the rebellious and treasonable acts which had reduced the unhappy Louis to that state;)—in the seizure of French property in neutral vessels; (that is, of property acquired in this country, in direct violation of an existing law;)—in the banishment of French subjects; (by an alien act, which is a domestic regulation, that every independent nation has an undoubted right to adopt, without accounting for its conduct, or affording any ground of offence, to any other power, and which Revolutionary France herself had adopted, without drawing forth any complaint from this country;)—in the violation of the commercial treaty; (which, it has been demonstrated, the French had themselves previously violated;) and, lastly, in dismissing the French Ambassador;

(whose letters of recal had been issued by the French Executive Council, before he received orders, from the British Ministers, to quit this country!)—On this sandy basis, which had nothing to support it but their own groundless assertions, they drew the conclusion, that the war was a war of choice on the part of Great Britain, and that it was a meanness in the Minister to call it a defensive war!

Mr. Fox seized the opportunity for abusing our allies, by observing, that if hatred of vice was a just ground of war (which no man had been so senseless as to suppose) we should not be at peace with any of them. He affirmed, that peace with the French regicides would be as secure as any which we had concluded with France at any other time. Was not Louis the XIVth, he asked, the declared enemy of our revolution?---*Did he not attempt, by force and artifice, to overthrow our establishment in church and state!**

The House was told that the armies of Austria and Prussia had shamefully fled before

* If I mistake not, Mr. Fox, in his History of the early part of James the Second, expressly denies, that the overthrow of our Established Church, and the restoration of Popery, constituted any part of the designs of that Monarch, and of Louis the XIVth.

untrained recruits, and unpractised generals.—In short, no argument, and no assertion, were omitted, which could tend to degrade our allies, and to inspirit our enemies. Every check, which the former had sustained, was magnified, and every victory, which the latter had lost, was depreciated.—And the forced acquiescence of the French, in the tyranny of their government, was urged as a proof of the power and popularity of their rulers!—The leading members of the opposition having, for some time, supported the administration, Mr. Sheridan made them the objects of his sarcastic remarks, which savoured more of envy and disappointment than of reason or of wit.—Mr. Fox moved, by way of amendment to the address, "to recommend to his Majesty to treat, as speedily as possible, for a peace with France, upon safe and advantageous terms, without any reference to the nature or form of the government that might exist in that country."

Mr. Dundas, and Mr. Windham, most ably combated the arguments of Mr. Fox. They admitted, that the mere abhorrence of crimes was no just cause of war, except those crimes bore directly upon our own safety;—but it was to this point, that all the reasoning, deduced from the character of the Jacobin government, immediately applied. — Mr. Windham com-

mented, with equal solidity and acuteness, on the inconsistency of ascribing to the war the opposite effects of uniting the discordant parties of France in the common cause, and of goading them on to the commission of those savage cruelties of which they were guilty towards each other.

Mr. Pitt argued on the same side, and cleared the grounds of the war, and the conduct of Ministers, from the obscurity in which the Opposition had ingeniously endeavoured to involve them. He then took a brief view of the different debates on the subject of war, and re-stated his own opinion of the propriety of an interference in the internal government of France, as a means, not only of annoying the enemy, but of securing those desirable ends—a safe and permanent peace; and an indemnity for the expenses of the war. Not that he had absolutely insisted upon an entire subversion of that government; he had always, on the contrary, asserted, that if a peace could be made upon terms of security to this country, no consideration of the detestable characters of the ruling men in France, or of the crimes and horrors with which they were sullied, ought to influence this country to reject such terms.

It was laid down as a maxim, that, if a foreign country, divided into two parties, dis-

covered hostile intentions towards another nation, it would be perfectly justifiable in that nation to endeavour to oppose those parties to each other; and, more especially, if the continuance of a system were the ground of that enmity, an interference, for the purpose of destroying that system, was perfectly fair. This principle, indeed, has been specifically maintained by Vattel, one of the most intelligent writers on the law of nations, and was expressly admitted by Mr. Fox, when acted upon, during the dissentions which subsisted between the Democratic and Stadtholderian parties, in Holland. Since the preceding year, it was remarked by Mr. Pitt, a new scene had presented itself in France, more eventful and extraordinary even than those which had been previously exhibited. However the horrors and crimes which had taken place, in former periods of the revolution, might have exceeded all expectation, and transcended even the utmost stretch of imagination, they now appeared only to have paved the way for fresh horrors, and accumulated crimes, beyond whatever fancy could have feigned, or fear conceived. Things had now come to such a crisis, that he had no difficulty to declare, that, while that system continued, peace was less desirable to him than war, under any circumstances of disaster which he could

possibly imagine. Not that he would contend, that the mere abhorrence of crimes, that the mere detestation of character, could constitute any valid reason for engaging in a war, except, as had been truly observed by Mr. Windham, they directly bore upon our own safety; but, in the present instance, the reasoning of his noble friend (Lord Mornington) directly applied. That reasoning had gone—first, to shew the horror and enormity of the system which now prevailed in France; secondly, the danger of the extension of that system, if not speedily and effectually resisted: thirdly, the measures which were employed for the purpose of extending that system: fourthly, the prospect of success, which we derived from the very nature of those measures, in our attempts to check the progress of the system: and, fifthly, that the success of those attempts depended upon the vigorous continuance of our warlike efforts, and that the circumstances of the case were such as, in the present moment, entirely precluded all negociation. Mr. Pitt defended Lord Mornington's speech from the attacks of those who had called it *declamatory*; upon what principle, he knew not, except that every effort of eloquence, in which the most forcible reasoning was adorned, and supported, by all the powers of language, was to be branded as mere declama-

tion. The proposition which he had brought forward had been argued not in a vague and general way, but on the strong ground of undeniable facts.

The history of the rulers of France had been taken from their own mouths, from records written under their inspection, and from decrees sanctioned by their authority.—From the nature of their government, there could be no dependence on the characters of whom it was composed. The shifting of persons took place like the shifting of scenes on the stage; but the change of persons produced no alteration in the conduct of the drama; the principles and proceedings of which still continued the same, or were distinguished in their progress only by increasing gradations of enormity. On the 21st of May, a new government, more dreadful in its character, and more fatal in its effects, than any which had preceded it, had been established,—this was the revolutionary government.

Lord Mornington, Mr. Pitt said, had begun his speech, by stating, that one of the leading features of this government was the abolition of religion. It would scarcely be maintained that such a step could tend only to affect opinions, and have no influence upon the conduct of a nation. The extinction of religi-

ous sentiment was only intended to pave the way for the introduction of fresh crimes, and entirely to break asunder those bonds of society which had already been loosened. It was intended only to familiarize the mind with guilt, and, by removing the obstacle of fear, to relieve it from the restraints of conscience. Infidelity, as his noble friend had remarked, was only meant to go hand in hand with insurrection.—A second measure of the revolutionary government was the destruction of property, a precedent which tended to destroy all ideas of justice, not less than the former precedent tended to extinguish all sentiments of piety. Not less detestable was their conduct in their mode of inflicting punishments,—a mode which took away from the accused all privilege of defence, and from their trials even the appearance of legal forms.—And all these crimes they had managed to convert into sources of revenue. From the pillage of the churches—from the destruction of property—from the confiscation of the effects of persons condemned, they derived the means for conducting their military operations. They pushed every resource to its utmost extent. From these circumstances Mr. Pitt inferred the speedy destruction of the revolutionary system, which had sent as many persons to the prison or the scaffold as it had sent recruits to the field.

In answer to the remarks on the distinction which the French had acquired in the field, (where, however, they had frequently betrayed the most disgraceful cowardice, and had scarcely, in a single instance, obtained a victory, without a vast superiority of numbers, while they had been often defeated by a greatly-inferior force,) it was observed, by Mr. Pitt, that their efforts were merely the result of a system of restraint and oppression, the most terrible and gigantic that had, perhaps, ever existed.—They were compelled into the field by the terror of the *Guillotine*,—they were supported in it only by those resources which their desperate situation afforded; and, in these circumstances, what could be the dependance on the steadiness of their operations, or what rational prospect could there be of the permanence of their exertions?—On that ground, it was contended that the more monstrous and terrible the system had become, the greater was the probability that it would be speedily overthrown. From the nature of the mind of man, and the necessary progress of human affairs, the impossibility was inferred that such a system could be of long duration; and surely no event could be looked for more desirable than the destruction of a system which existed to the misery of France, and to the terror of Europe.

Mr. Pitt here reasoned on the ground of experience, and on the nature of the human mind, which, in the ordinary affairs of individuals, or of nations, supply the best criterion by which to form a judgment of future events. But the French revolution, as it was founded on new and visionary principles, and was brought about by means unparalleled in the annals of civilized states, so was it destined to baffle the efforts of reason, and the deductions of experience, when applied to ascertain the course which it would describe, in its destructive progress, to define its limits, or to mark its end. Certainly there was much of solidity in this argument, considered abstractedly; and, if applied to any other people than the French, and to any other event than their revolution, the result would, most probably, have sanctioned the conclusions of the speaker. But the system of terror, now established in France, presented a new subject for contemplation to the statesman.—In vain would he search history for an example to direct his judgment, or to assist his opinion, respecting it;—exercising the most absolute controul over the body, it expelled every passion, every sentiment, and every feeling, from the mind, but fear;—its operation was, at once, most irregular and most terrible; and its consequences, it was as difficult to anticipate as it was to avert.

As to the question, whether he was ever to make peace with the Jacobins, Mr. Pitt said it was difficult to answer, nor could it be either prudent or rational in him to give it any specific answer at that moment. It was a question, the solution of which must depend upon a combination of events. As circumstances varied, a different line of conduct must, of necessity, be pursued; and it would be very unwise to bind up his discretion, to act with regard to those contingencies which might arise, by pledging himself at present to the adoption of any one set of measures. Under the actual circumstances of the times, he had no hesitation to declare, that he would rather chuse to persevere in the war, even amidst the worst disasters, and should deem such conduct much more safe and honourable, than to conclude a peace with the ruling powers in France, while acting on their present system. He went still further, and declared, in the most unequivocal manner, that the moment would never come when he should not think any alternative preferable to that of making peace with France under such circumstances. The motion of Mr. Fox was certainly couched in very general terms, and such as might comprehend every thing for which Mr. Pitt had contended.

It recommended to his Majesty to conclude a peace whenever it could be done upon safe and advantageous terms, without any reference to the nature and form of government which might exist in France. Mr. Pitt was also of opinion, that a safe and advantageous peace ought to be concluded, but that the security and benefits of that peace must depend upon the establishment of a government essentially different from the present. But though the motion was calculated to attain no precise object, it was nevertheless capable of doing much mischief. It meant and said, that the House of Commons entertained sentiments different from those expressed in his Majesty's speech. It held out to our allies that they were no longer to consider us as eager to support their cause, or as acting upon the principles upon which we embarked along with them; while it must impart encouragement and confidence to our enemies.

Adverting to Mr. Fox's assertion, that a treaty with Robespierre and his associates would afford as much security for the continuance of peace, as had been derived from the treaties of Ryswick and Utretcht; and that as much dependence might be placed in the good faith of the revolutionary government as on that of Louis XIV, Mr. Pitt expressly denied it.—

He affirmed, that had that King even succeeded in his ambitious projects to their full extent, what would then have been suffered, might have been considered as a deliverance, compared with the necessary consequences of the success of the revolutionary system. All the splendour of his court, all the abilities of his generals, the discipline of his armies, and all the great exertions which he was enabled to make, proceeded from a high sentiment of honour. The exercise of that power which he possessed, however directed to the purposes of his ambition, was regulated by certain principles, and limited within certain bounds.—No such principles actuated,—no such bounds restricted,—the conduct of the French rulers of the present day. They had contrived to banish all restraints, and, with an ambition more insatiable, they had, at their disposal, means of destruction much more formidable than that monarch ever possessed in the plenitude of his power.

It was declared by Mr. Pitt, that he by no means attached the same degree of importance to the restoration of monarchy in France, as to the destruction of the Jacobin system. He attached importance to the former, from an opinion that, in the present state of France, some settled form of government should take

place, in which the greater part of the people might be disposed to concur. The ancient government, he considered, as affording the best materials upon which they could work, in introducing any change into the fabric of their constitution. Besides, as he had thought it incumbent upon him, in any proposed interference with the internal affairs of that country, to consult chiefly the happiness of the people, monarchy appeared to him the best calculated to promote their true interests. In another respect, he had been misrepresented, in having imputed to him the statement that the restitution of monarchy was an event which must necessarily be preceded by the conquest of France. He considered monarchy only as the standard under which the people of France might be united, the more especially as it was that form of government which Lord Mornington had proved to be most agreeable to the wishes of two-thirds of the inhabitants.—But it had been said, that even the re-establishment of royalty would afford us no additional security for the permanence of peace, and that the French would still be equally formidable to this country. It was, however, a wild and extravagant assertion that the monarchy of France, stripped, as it would be then, of much of its power, and diminished in its revenues, would

be as formidable as a system which had proved itself to be more dangerous than monarchy ever had been in the fulness of its power, and in the height of its greatness.

Towards the conclusion of his speech, Mr. Pitt pressed upon the attention of the House one part of Lord Mornington's argument, relating to a point which, in his opinion, precluded the possibility of treating with France for a peace at that moment. A decree had been passed by the Convention, by which every one was forbidden to treat with any enemy while they remained in the territories of the republic; and on the 11th of April it was again decreed, that those persons should be punished with death who should propose to treat with any power, which should not have previously acknowledged the independence of the French nation, and the unity and indivisibility of the republic, founded upon liberty and equality.

Thus, by any proposal to treat, the nation would not only incur the disgrace of the most abject humiliation, but absolutely put itself at the mercy of the enemy, and subject itself to the necessity of receiving any terms which they might be disposed to dictate. Were we then to withdraw our armies, to deprive ourselves of the co-operation of our allies, to forego all our acquisitions, to give up Condé, Quesnoy,

Valenciennes, Tobago, Fort Louis, and all the factories in the east? Were we to abandon all these acquisitions, the rewards of our past labours, and the pledges of our future success? Should we consent to do all this, should we even hasten to send an ambassador to treat with the Convention, (and Mr. Fox had, on a former occasion, volunteered himself for that service) we must not only acknowledge the unity and indivisibility of the French Republic, but must do so in the way prescribed by themselves. We must acknowledge it as founded on liberty and equality;—we must subscribe to the whole of their code,—and, by that act, sanction the deposition of their Sovereign and the annihilation of their legislature. It might be said, that they would not insist upon all this to its full extent; but Mr. Pitt professed to have but little confidence in them, when he compared their past declarations with their conduct. To whatever pitch of extravagance they might have reached in what they had said, they had always outstripped it by what they had done. The absurdity of their expressions had, in every instance, been surpassed by the violence of their actions; nor could any hopes of more moderation be derived from any change of parties. In all the revolutions which had hitherto taken place, the first recommendation

to favour had been hostility to England.—The most violent party had invariably predominated. The leading feature in their present character was a spirit of military enterprise, not exerted for the purposes of ambition, but every where spreading, in its progress, terror and desolation. We were called, in the present age, to witness the political and moral phenomenon of a mighty and civilized people, transformed into an artificial horde of banditti, throwing off all the restraints which have influenced men in social life, displaying a savage valour directed by a sanguinary spirit, forming rapine and destruction into a system, and perverting, to their detestable purposes, all the talents and ingenuity which they derived from their advanced stage of civilization, all the refinements of art, and all the discoveries of science. We beheld them uniting the utmost savageness and ferocity of design with the most consummate contrivance and skill in execution, and seemingly engaged in no less than a conspiracy to exterminate, from the face of the earth, all honour, humanity, justice, and religion. In that state of things, there could be no question but to resist, where resistance could alone be effectual, till such time as, by the blessings of Providence upon our endeavours, we should have secured the independence of this country,

and the general interests of Europe. The House concurring in these sentiments, Mr. Fox's amendment was rejected by a majority of two hundred and eighteen, and the original address adopted.

A similar address was moved in the House of Lords by Lord Stair, and seconded by Lord Auckland; it was opposed on the same grounds on which it had been opposed in the Lower House, by the Earls of Guildford, Derby, Stanhope, and Lauderdale; the Duke of Norfolk and the Marquis of Lansdowne. Lord Guildford moved an amendment similar, in substance, and nearly so in words, to that moved by Mr. Fox, which was supported by those peers, and successfully opposed by the Duke of Portland, Marquis Townshend, Lords Spencer, Coventry, Kinnoul, Mansfield, Hardwicke, Abingdon, Carlisle, and Grenville. The line of argument pursued was, of necessity, the same as in the House of Commons, and was supported with great dignity and eloquence. But one argument was used by the Opposition too ridiculous to be passed over by the historian without some notice.—It was urged, as a proof of the existence of a solid government in France, that the French armies had obtained victories in the field;—and General Wurmser, the Duke of

Brunswick, the King of Prussia, Lord Hood, Sir Gilbert Elliott, the Royalists in La Vendeè, and the Lyonnese, weré seriously called upon to witness the truth of this assertion. With equal reason might it be alleged, that a band of successful robbers, who way-laid every traveller, plundered them of their effects, and deprived many of them of their lives, afforded a demonstration of the existence of a fixed and admirable code of criminal jurisprudence in the country which they infested. But there is nothing too low to which the spirit of party will not descend.—To the honour of the House of Peers be it recorded, that the amendment, so supported, was rejected by ninety-seven votes against *twelve*. A few days after this singular discussion, Earl Stanhope moved an address to his Majesty, beseeching him to acknowledge the French Republic! Every thing which the French Revolutionists had done was panegyrized by this British senator, who, with ignorance equal to his audacity, dared to defend them against the charge of Atheism, though the French openly gloried in the fact, and insisted that the priests and nobles were most infected with it.* Nobody appearing to second the

* Neither this, nor any other assertion, however preposterous, and however contrary to fact, can appear extraordinary,

motion, it occasioned but little remark.—Some few just animadversions, however, were made on it, particularly by Lord Abingdon, who truly observed that Lord Stanhope's speech required no other answer than a horse-laugh.

The trials which had taken place in Scotland, particularly those of Mr. Muir, and the Reverend Fysche Palmer, the former a Scotch barrister, and the latter an *Unitarian* preacher at Dundee, who had been convicted of sedition in the autumn of 1793, and sentenced to transportation, excited considerable alarm among their friends and associates in England, and attracted the attention even of some members of the British Senate, who professed to condemn their conduct, while they deplored their fate. Mr. Adam, a barrister of some eminence, had given notice, early in the session, of his intention to move for permission to bring in a bill for subjecting the sentences of the Scotch judges, in criminal cases, to an appeal to the British House of Lords;—and he accordingly brought forward the question, in the House of Commons, on the 4th of February.—In this

when advanced by a man who, forgetful of his rank in society, and of the duties attached to the situation and character of a British Senator, could publicly boast, in the Senate, that he was a *Jacobin*, and "a correspondent not of Mr. but of *Citoyen* Condorcet." *Parliamentary Debates, May* 2, 1794.

discussion, which he conducted with great ability, Mr. Adam laboured to establish two points,—first, the illegality of the judgment pronounced on the convicted parties; and, secondly, the necessity of an appeal, in all criminal cases. In arguing the last of these points, on the motion for leave to bring in the bill of appeal, he laid it down as a general principle, which pervaded the whole system of judicial polity, both in England and Scotland, that *the decision of no court should be final where the business originated.* But never was assertion more incorrect; by many penal statutes, the power of decision without appeal is vested in Magistrates out of sessions; the sentences of the quarter sessions, in most criminal cases, are final, though the proceedings may, before trial, be removed, by *certiorari,* to a superior court. No appeal lies from the sentences of judges of assize, in criminal processes, unless where a doubt arises on the construction of a law, and the judge himself specially reserves the point for the opinion of his brethren; and in all cases of impeachment before the House of Lords, the decision of the court is final. Mr. Adam's motion was opposed on the ground that the projected innovation in the criminal law of Scotland did not tend to remove any existing doubt, while it was not called for by the Scotch

themselves, who were perfectly satisfied with the law as it stood. The motion was rejected by a hundred and twenty-six votes against *thirty-one.*

It was Mr. Adam's intention, had the House adopted his motion, to give to the new law a retrospective effect, so as to include the case of Messrs. Muir and Palmer, whose fate appears to have had no small influence on his conduct on this occasion. Foiled in this attempt, he resolved to make an effort to gain his point by more direct means; and he gave notice of his intention to move for a revisal of the proceedings of the Court of Justiciary, in the cases of those convicts. In order to promote the same object, Mr. Sheridan, on the 24th of February, presented a petition from Palmer, who, as well as Muir, then lay on board transports at Woolwich, stating, that he conceived himself to be suffering under an illegal sentence, and praying such relief as to the wisdom of the House should seem meet. Mr. Pitt urged the impropriety of the interposition of that House, between a sentence pronounced by a competent tribunal and the execution of that sentence; and, on that account, he thought the petition ought not to be received. It was, however, ultimately ordered to lie on the table; and, on

the 10th of March the main question underwent a long and serious discussion.

It was contended by Mr. Adam, first, that the crime imputed to Messrs. Muir and Palmer did not amount to *leasing-making*, or public libel, which was the offence charged in the indictment, and which, by the English law, was only a misdemeanour; and, secondly, that admitting it did, the punishment fixed by the law of Scotland was *banishment only*, and not *transportation*. He adduced several cases to prove the difference between *banishment* and *transportation*, and to shew that the law which inflicted the former did not, of necessity, confer the power of inflicting the latter. He then advanced this position—that what should lead to the reversal of a sentence, on the ground of legal error, in all cases where an appeal lay, should, where no such remedy could be applied, induce the House to address the Throne for mercy, as the only means left to attain the ends of justice.

On the other hand, the Lord Advocate of Scotland opposed Mr. Adam's exposition of the Scottish law, and impeached the justice of his conclusions.—It was perfectly immaterial, in his view of the case, whether the crime charged in the indictment was *sedition* or *leasing-making*, because for the latter the court was

competent to inflict the punishment of transportation. The term *banishment*, he maintained, which occurred in the statute of 1703 against leasing-making, did, both by its common import, and more particularly by the usage of the Scotch law, include transportation. It was clear that the courts of law not only understood, but applied the word, in this comprehensive sense, from the uniform practice of the court of session in cases of fraudulent bankruptcy; which, by the statute of 1696, were made punishable by "Banishment," or otherwise, (death excepted;) and, in various instances, that court had transported such offenders to the plantations. Abundance of similar instances occurred in the records of the Court of Justiciary, which it was impossible to open without finding cases of persons sentenced to "banishment" by that court, and transportation described, in the concluding part of the sentence, as a mode of putting it into effect.—But, it was contended, that the matter was cleared from all doubt, by the fact, that, within eight months only after the statute of 1703 was passed, one Bailly was sentenced, by the Privy Council, under that statute, to be banished for the crime of leasing-making, and was ordered to be detained in prison till a fit opportunity should offer for his "transportation;"

and, in support of this inference, it was observed, that all the members of the Privy Council must have been members of the Parliament which enacted the law, and, of course, perfectly acquainted with the sense which the framers of it affixed to the word banishment.

Mr. Adam's propositions concerning sedition were controverted by Mr. Pitt, who observed, that, if it could be seriously maintained that no provision was made by the Scotch law for that numerous class of offences which were punishable in England as crimes and misdemeanors, if that law were so defective, and authority so silent on the subject, it was the duty of civil society to declare, through its magistrates and judges, wherein the crime of sedition consisted, for a crime it was, permanent in its nature, however diversified by circumstances, times, and seasons. On the contrary, he contended, that crimes of sedition, not comprehended within the statutes against leasing-making, were, by the common law of Scotland, liable to *arbitrary punishment*, that is, any punishment, short of death, which the discretion of the judges might lead them to inflict. These crimes were made treason by an act of 1584, which continued in force till 1707, when Scotch and English treasons were assimilated to each other.—From this period,

then, they must be either reduced to nonentities, which it was absurd to imagine, or return to the same predicament, in the eye of the law, in which they stood prior to the statute of 1584.

Some other objections, in reference to the severity of the punishment, and the nature of the evidence, were urged and repelled; but these were the prominent, and only material, points for historical notice. After considerable discussion, thirty-two members were found to be in favour of the motion, and one hundred and seventy-one adverse to it. But Mr. Adam belonged to a party who were neither to be checked by disappointment, nor intimidated by defeat. A few days after this decision, he moved to appoint a committee to inquire, chiefly, into the crimes of leasing-making and sedition, the right of appeal, the power of granting a new trial, and the propriety of introducing a grand jury, similar to that of England. He again expatiated upon all the alleged defects in the present system of Scottish jurisprudence, and was again answered by the Lord Advocate, and by Mr. Dundas, who deprecated all wanton innovations, and denied the necessity of any change. Mr. Adam was not more successful on this, than on the former, occasion, having been able to persuade only three and twenty members of the House to adopt his opinions.

The same questions were agitated in the House of Lords, and with the same result. Lord Stanhope, with his usual eccentricity, moved the House to investigate the case of Muir and Palmer; and, if the proceedings in Scotland should be found to be illegal, to reverse the sentence;—that is, to assume a power which they did not possess. Such a motion was, of course, treated with marked neglect. Lord Lauderdale, on a future day, introduced the subject in a more regular way, and moved an address to the Throne, similar to that moved by Mr. Adam in the Lower House;—but his motion was rejected without a division.—Thus ended the attempt to rescue the convicted reformers of Scotland from their impending fate. The sentence pronounced upon them was now carried into effect, and they were all transported to New South Wales.

The Opposition, resolved to suffer no opportunity to escape for attacking the Ministers, and ever anxious to display what they were pleased to term a constitutional jealousy, and an earnest desire to promote the public welfare, but what their opponents considered as the effect of disappointed ambition,' an effusion of political spleen, and an unworthy attempt to acquire popularity at the expense of the best interests of the coun[illegible] made every political measure now adopted, or omitted, the

subject of animadversion and censure in Parliament. Mr. Sheridan charged the Ministers with neglect to put our colonial settlements in Nova Scotia in a proper state of defence; and to supply adequate convoys for the protection of our trade. But these charges were repelled by those against whom they were directed; and the House of Commons refused to entertain the proposed enquiry respecting them. A treaty which had been recently concluded with the King of Sardinia, by which a subsidy of £200,000 was granted to that monarch to enable him to support 50,000 troops, to act against France, supplied another ground of declamation, and another subject of complaint. The subsidy was represented as perfectly needless, as that monarch had every motive of self-preservation to induce him to act without it. It does not seem to have occurred to these considerate politicians that the *will* might exist without the *ability;* and that not merely *policy*, but *self-interest*, required that we should supply the means of carrying that will into effect, in support of the common cause. The debate to which this transaction gave rise* was not otherwise interesting than as it produced a brilliant display of maiden eloquence from Mr. Canning, who had been recently brought into Parliament.

* January 31st.

The youthful orator did not limit his observations to the subject immediately before the House, but introduced it by an able and copious review of the origin and objects of the war, whence he deduced the wisdom and policy of the measure under discussion. He contended, with equal strength and justice, that such a treaty ought not to be examined on the petty tradesman-like principle of a *quid pro quo*, a narrow scrutiny into the goodness or badness of the bargain, but should be considered as forming a part of one great, connected, comprehensive, scheme, which had for its object, not conquest or gain, but to repress the aggrandizing spirit of the French Republic. He spurned the ungenerous notion of taking advantage of the distressed situation of the Sardinian Monarch, in order to force his acceptance of inadequate terms. Such had not been the policy of Great Britain in former times. He adverted to a subsidy of £670,000, voted to the King of Prussia, in 1758, not to purchase the support of a powerful ally, but (as the preamble to the bill expressly declared) because he was harassed by his enemies, because he was deprived of part of his dominions, and was incapable of defending the remainder. These circumstances, which were now urged as good reasons for abandoning our ally, were, at that time, assigned as the

very causes for the succour which we gave, and, unless this country had degenerated from its former liberality of sentiment, and of conduct, or had altered its political system, he hoped the same expanded and generous principles would still influence our decision on the present occasion.

Mr. Canning next entered into a masterly delineation of the features of the French Government, which he characterised with peculiar felicity. In retorting on the Opposition one of their favourite arguments, he observed, that if it were true, as had been perpetually asserted, that the reprobate characters who now ruled in France rose to power by the distractions of that country within, and by the pressure of hostile force from without, that power would cease with the cessation of the causes which produced it.—The moment of pacification, then, would be the moment of their downfal, and their downfal would cancel all their acts. This speech fixed the attention of the House, which afforded its sanction to the proposed subsidy. The Opposition also cavilled at the increase of the army, insisting that the attention of government should be principally directed to the augmentation of our naval force.—But Mr. Pitt declared, that mere naval exertions were not sufficient against a country which did not

possess the command of the sea, and which adopted no means for the protection of its commerce. It was the usurpation and aggrandizement of France, by land, which threatened Great Britain, as well as all Europe, and to that point it was necessary that our resistance should be directed. Even from our failures the necessity of an addition to our land force was deducible, for they had, uniformly, been owing to a vast superiority of numbers in the enemy, who were not merely an army, but an armed nation. —This last expression was captiously seized upon by the Opposition, as a proof of the accuracy of their own assertions respecting the spirit of union which influenced the efforts of republican France. But Mr. Pitt instantly exposed the fallacy and absurdity of the inference, observing, that he had only used the term to shew that to their numbers alone the French were indebted for all the victories which they had gained; and that, admitting them to be an armed nation, it by no means followed that they were united.—Indeed the reverse was notoriously the fact. — They were armed by terror, and exposed themselves to the sword of the enemy on the frontiers, only to avoid the greater danger of the guillotine at home.

The annual budget was opened by Mr. Pitt, on the 5th of February, when it appeared

that the expenses of the current year would amount to nineteen millions nine hundred and forty thousand pounds; and towards which, the Land and Malt Tax, and the growing produce of the Consolidated Fund, with three millions and a half of Exchequer bills, and half a million from the East India Company, would supply but eight millions nine hundred and forty thousand pounds, so that it became necessary to raise the sum of eleven millions, by loan.—This loan, agreeably to the principle of fair and open competition which Mr. Pitt had adopted, in preference to the old practice of disposing of the loan to any favourite contractor, and so rendering it, in many instances, the source of corrupt practices, had been taken on terms highly favourable to the public, the contractors having offered to accept, for each hundred pounds to be advanced, so much stock and long annuities as, at the price of the day, would produce ninety-nine pounds nineteen shillings and ninepence.—The interest of the eleven millions to be thus raised, together with the one per cent. to be appropriated to the gradual extinction of the capital, would amount to £650,000, to which were to be added £248,000, to be applied to the reduction of the existing and expected navy debt, (which Mr. Pitt proposed to devise the means of liqui-

dating in a short time, contrary to the usual practice of leaving it to be funded and provided for at the end of the war;) and £10,000, the amount of the vexatious tax upon gloves, and of another on births and burials, which he meant to repeal, making a total of £908,000. The next point for consideration was the means by which this annual sum was to be raised. There remained, unappropriated, of taxes imposed in 1791, £385,000;—by a new regulation of the duty on spirits in Scotland, it was expected to supply £45,000;—by a new duty on British spirits, £107,000;—by a new duty on foreign spirits, £136,000;—by a duty of one shilling and sixpence per thousand on bricks and tiles, in addition to the existing duty of half-a-crown, £70,000;—by a similar duty on slate and stone carried coastwise, £30,000;—by a tax on plate and crown glass, £52,000;—by a fresh duty on paper, £63,000;—and, by a tax of £100 on the indenture of every person articled to an attorney, and of another £100 on his admission to practice, £25,000, but excluding, from the operation of this tax, those clerks who were already articled.—Thus the necessary sum would be raised without the addition of any impost which could be felt by the great mass of the people.

The French government having recently adopted measures for appropriating to their own use all the property of Frenchmen, of whatever nature or description, in foreign countries; and for giving assignats, in exchange, Mr. Pitt deemed it expedient to counteract this nefarious scheme, by the timely interference of the legislature.—Accordingly, a bill was soon after brought in by the Solicitor-General, which passed into a law, to prohibit, under severe penalties, the remittance of any sums from this country to France during the war. Such sums were to be considered as a sacred deposit in the hands of their present holders until a peace, when the creditors might sue for the recovery of them in the courts of law. By this wise regulation, not only the design of our enemies to support, by such means, the credit of their immense mass of assignats, would be frustrated, but individuals, also, would be protected against the monstrous oppression of being compelled to receive, at Par, a paper-security not worth one-seventh of its nominal value.

Among the military plans in agitation at this time, was a projected expedition to the coast of France, with a view to co-operate with the loyalists in Brittany, and in the neighbouring districts; and a body of Hessian troops,

in the pay of England, was destined for this service. As, however, the preparations were not in a sufficient state of forwardness when these troops arrived from the Continent, and sickness would be produced by detaining them on board the transports, till every thing was ready for carrying the plan into effect; it was deemed proper to land them, and to put them into temporary quarters, at Portsmouth, in the Isle of Wight, and in other convenient places, near the coast. This circumstance was communicated to Parliament, in a message from his Majesty, on the 27th of March. As many similar cases had occurred at different periods, and as the cause and necessity of the measure were so perfectly obvious, it was natural to conclude, that the usual communication of the fact to Parliament would be satisfactory.—But it did not square with the views and designs of the opposition, to suffer any act of the minister to pass without censure or debate.—It was now insisted, that he ought to have moved for a bill of indemnity;—and he was charged with having violated the bill of rights, and the act of settlement. Mr. Grey, on the 10th of February, exerted all his ingenuity to induce the House to adopt the abstract proposition; "that to employ foreigners in any situation of military trust, or to bring foreign

troops into the kingdom, without the consent of Parliament first had and obtained, is contrary to law."

In so framing his motion, he had, no doubt, a view to another object, the employment of French emigrant officers, which, soon after, became the subject of discussion. The folly of discussing abstract principles was strongly insisted on, by different members, but more particularly by Mr. Windham, who truly represented the only proper point for the House to consider, to be, whether the Minister had acted wrong in advising the disembarkation of the Hessian troops, under the circumstances of the case. But this was the only point which the opposition did not chuse to discuss; they preferred wasting their own time, and that of the House, in the discussion of principles which no one was so ignorant as to contest, and in the deprecation of consequences which no one was so weak as to expect. The motion for the previous question at length put an end to the debate. On a subsequent day, Mr. Grey renewed the same work of supererogation, and with the same effect.

With a view to put the nation in the best practicable state of defence against the threatened invasion by the French, as well as to leave as large a disposable force as possible for

foreign service, Mr. Pitt had deemed it advisable to afford encouragement to the formation of volunteer companies, in augmentation of the militia, and also of distinct bodies of foot and horse, for the purpose of local defence.—This invitation was held out in a circular letter addressed to the Lords-Lieutenants of the different counties, who were supplied with a brief plan of the nature and conditions of the proposed service, and a general subscription was recommended as the best means of defraying the expense to be incurred by the execution of the scheme. On the 25th of March, the King communicated his intention of augmenting the land forces to parliament, and called upon them to assist him in carrying into effect such measures as might be requisite for the general security.

Mr. Sheridan had made no scruple to stigmatize the voluntary contributions of the subject as most dangerous and unconstitutional, and he now signified his intention of calling upon the House to pronounce its illegality.—Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, distinctly avowed his decided opinion, that every subscription to be applied for the security of the country, in order to raise a force which should receive the sanction of Parliament, was legal and constitutional, and professed his readiness to meet

the discussion whenever a proper opportunity should occur for the purpose. On the 28th of of March, Mr. Sheridan brought forward his threatened motion.—In the full ardour of his patriotism, he did not hesitate to lay down the broad proposition, that the people had no right to give, or the King to receive, these benevolences, without the consent of Parliament.—And he assigned these reasons, as the grounds of his assertion:—1st. Because the contrary supposition militated against the first principles of a mixed government, and a representative system, and, consequently, was not reconcilable with the letter or spirit of our constitution.—2dly. Because it was not consistent with the ancient and sound usages of the country, nor conformable to the best authorities;—and, 3dly, because, if it even had the sanction both of custom and authority; it was not a wise course, nor fit to be resorted to as a source of public revenue.*

It is evident that the last of these reasons could only decide the question of *expediency*, and not that of *right*;—and that, however valid the reason itself might be, the right might exist in spite of it. In discussing the two first reasons, Mr. Sheridan rather laboured to support one

* Rivington's Annual Register for 1791. P. 180, 181.

assertion by another equally disputable, than to to adduce arguments, proofs, or authorities, in confirmation of his general position.—His authorities, indeed, applied exclusively to *compulsory* benevolences, of the illegality of which no doubt could possibly be entertained. He was answered by the Attorney-General, who quoted many cases to prove that the right which Mr. Sheridan denied had been acknowledged by the best authorities, and acted upon in a variety of instances. In 1759, the City of London had subscribed a sum of money, which was sent to the Secretary of State, *to be applied agreeably to the order of council;* and Mr. Pitt (father to the present Minister) wrote a letter in answer to this, containing a warm acknowledgement of the patriotism of the City, and an assurance that the money should be no otherwise supplied than as the Privy Council should direct. In 1778, another similar case had occurred, which was sanctioned by the authority of Lords Camden and Thurlow; and by the refusal of the House of Commons to declare its illegality, when a motion for that purpose was made by Mr. Wilkes. The invitation to raise volunteers, in 1782, was also cited as a case in point. The same line of argument was adopted by Mr. Windham, and others, while it was strongly opposed by Mr. Fox.

The schism which had taken place in the Opposition, and which had since been followed by an open rupture, led to much bitterness of sarcasm, keenness of rebuke, and severity of reproach, from both parts of it, during this discussion. By Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, and others, who had, from the most honourable and patriotic motives, supported the Ministers in their resistance of French principles, and of French arms, it was remarked, and certainly not with more severity than truth, that the most zealous partizans of the French cause could not adopt a line of conduct more favourable to the views of the enemy than that pursued by the mover and supporters of the present question; who had deserted the genuine principles of their party, and had joined a set of men, whose wild and frantic notions of democracy would, if reduced to practice, accomplish universal ruin. Mr. Sheridan, on the other hand, called upon his opponents to come boldly forth and impeach those whom they really suspected of treason,—instead of indulging in dark and unwarranted insinuations, in striking and insidious jeers. This call had more of warmth than of real courage in it, for he very well knew that these gentlemen never meant to reproach him with the actual commission of treason, though they most correctly

stated the tendency of his conduct to be most hostile to the good of his country. Mr. Sheridan, however, arraigned them with great violence, for, what he preposterously termed, their base desertion of *himself*, and of his friends, for their prostitution of every principle which they had before maintained, both in public and private, and for their *servile* submission in supporting every plan of the Minister, of that Minister who was, before, the uniform object of their derision, reproach, and scorn. This virulent invective, at once unparliamentary, indecent, and unfounded, only served to shew the bitterness of that disappointment which was felt by the retainers of the party, at the honourable conduct of their leaders.

Lord Lauderdale echoed the sentiments of Mr. Sheridan in the House of Lords, where only six members could be found to concur with him in his opinions. The discussion, however, was renewed, in the House of Commons, on the 7th of April, on the third reading of the bill for the encouragement and discipline of such persons as should voluntarily enrol themselves for the general defence of the country. On this occasion, Mr. Francis moved, that the third article of the Bill of Rights should be read, which declares, "That levying money for, or "to the use of the Crown, by pretence of

" prerogative, without grant of Parliament, " for longer time, or in other manner, than the " same is or shall be granted, is illegal." Mr. Francis contended that voluntary subscriptions were a direct violation of the principle maintained in this article; and he went still farther than Mr. Sheridan, and asserted, that it was not in the power of Parliament to sanction the proceeding; Parliament were delegates themselves, and could not delegate their duty to others. So that, according to this mode of reasoning, it was impossible to raise voluntary subscriptions for the defence of the country; for neither the people nor their representatives had the power so to raise them. A curious kind of constitution must that be which forbids all those, who enjoy its advantages, voluntarily to contribute to its support against foreign and domestic enemies. Lord Wycombe took the same side of the question, contending that the precedent of 1782 did not apply to the present case, and observing that there was a wide distinction between a subscription for a naval force, and a subscription for the increase of the army.

Mr. Pitt now thought it necessary to deliver his sentiments on the question, and, in order to disembarrass it as much as possible from all extraneous, irrelevant, or

doubtful matter, he consented to waive any advantage which might be derived from the proceeding of 1782, and to argue it on a general view of the laws and constitution of the country, as they appeared written in the statute books, handed down by precedents, and confirmed by the first and most respectable authorities, legal as well as political, which the page of British history, or the records of jurisprudence, could boast.—And he contended, that, on a fair construction of those laws, and of that constitution, by principles of reason and of truth, the measure would be found to stand on the firmest grounds, and to resist every attack which subtlety and ingenuity could possibly devise, or temerity venture to make upon it. He stated, as his reason for having opposed the production of the circular letters issued in 1782, that the merit of the present case did not at all hinge or depend upon that precedent. He noticed, however, an observation of Mr. Grey,—"That as the letters were not produced in form, he would, in imitation of the practice of the courts of law, deny the authenticity of such as were produced, and say that they were fabrications and forgeries!" Such terms, Mr. Pitt said, might possibly be used by Mr. Grey when he thought them useful to his argument; for his part, he doubted whether they would not be

reprobated for their coarseness even in a court of law; but he begged leave to remind that gentleman, for his instruction, that he was then in a *Court of Parliament*, and that his language was, to say no worse of it, more adapted to an advocate at law than to a Member of Parliament.

The distinctions made by Lord Wycombe, Mr. Pitt stated to apply to the mode of executing the measure, and not to the true constitutional point; for while he reprobated subscriptions for an army, he approved of them for increasing the navy; instanced a number of cases which had already been mentioned by the Attorney-General, and added his own contribution also, by producing another instance, of the subscription for encountering the Spanish Armada. His Lordship's distinction, however, between subscribing for a navy and for an army, was downright subtlety, mere fallacious casuistry, too flimsily, and slightly, covered to escape detection, even by the weakest sight.—For, first, he stated, that all voluntary contributions were illegal, yet admitted that for a navy they would be justifiable; here, then, ended the great abstract principle. But the subscription, not illegal *per se*, was vitiated by its being for an army; this was directly confounding the end with the means; that is to say, the *end*, not the *means*, vitiated the measure; for if it

were true that a subscription could not legally be taken at all, nor any money levied but by the direct order of Parliament, it could no more be done for one branch of the public service than for the other. In the next breath, the noble lord had contended, that the case in 1794 was adverse to the laws and constitution, while that in 1782 was perfectly legal, because the same means (voluntary contributions) were not pursued, though the end was the same, namely, to raise an army. And thus the simple fact of raising an army, in 1794, was to be the destruction of that constitution, and the ruin of the noblest fabric which the wisdom of man had ever raised; but, in 1782, it was so laudable, so legal, and so constitutional, as to be held up in contrast to the mischiefs now threatened. Whatever degree of favour popular opinions might lead some men to attach to the one measure, in preference to the other, the truth was, that there was not in the history of this country to be found a war, in which the privilege of subscribing to the assistance of government, against the enemy, had not been enjoyed by the people; and, in the course of which, there were not to be found answers to all the objections that had been urged against the present measure.

Having stated the fallacy and absurdity of this mode of reasoning, Mr. Pitt proceeded to shew, that although the circular letter of Lord Shelbane, in 1782, had been positively stated to exclude all idea of subscription, it had not been so understood through the country. The county of Sussex, which had, by public subscription, raised and supported a large military force, in 1779, and the two succeeding years, immediately on receiving that letter, and thinking it implied a desire for a subscription, set on foot contributions in consequence of it, and actually raised, and grafted on their former establishment, no less than three additional companies. Here, then, was, according to the principles maintained by the very gentlemen at that time in power, a manifest violation of the constitution. Why did they not *then* resist it? Why not make it a subject of Parliamentary Investigation? And what, he desired to know, was so properly an object of their jealousy, as an illegal and unconstitutional act, committed on the footing and authority of their own letter? They should have stept forward and saved their country from the impending ruin. But did they do so?—No!—They knew that the measure was legal, constitutional, and salutary; though, unfortunately for the credit of their politics, their sentiments changed with their

situations, and they now thought it illegal, unconstitutional, and mischievous!

He next considered the question in a legal point of view, and produced a variety of indisputable authorities to establish the legality of voluntary contributions. In 1746, he said, a doubt had been cast upon it, but it was unequivocally decreed by Lord Hardwicke. On that occasion, many great men had raised regiments at their own expense, and he wished to know who that man was that would be so regardless of reputation, as to maintain that great men might, legally, and with safety to the constitution, subscribe, and three or four hundred yeomen could not? It had been said, that if contributions were purely spontaneous, they were legal;—but if made on the solicitation of government, not so. To the spirit and principle of this distinction, he declared, he would never assent; but even admitting that it really were so, no skill nor ingenuity could rescue the case of 1782 from that anathema; for he would maintain, that the secretary's letter, and the plans which it enclosed, contained a solicitation which, in 1794, would be called a mandate.

Mr. Pitt entered into a minute consideration of all the precedents, from the revolution to the year 1778, which he brought to bear

immediately upon the point in question; and shewed that, in principle and effect, there was no difference between them. The case of 1778 was the only one in which the principle of voluntary contributions had been contested. He had, for many reasons, great respect for the illustrious characters, (Lord Camden, Mr. Burke, and others) who gave their opinions, on that subject, against the legality of subscriptions; but, with all the esteem which he entertained for them, he could not forbear to remark, that no man, who had studied human nature, could fail to perceive that, in the most enlightened minds, there was a bias which, on certain occasions, and under certain circumstances, operated upon the judgment, and sometimes led it to mistake the means for the end; and men, even in deciding upon principle, were subject to this abuse of the understanding. This, with all due deference for the great characters to whom he alluded, appeared to Mr. Pitt to have been the case with them, in the discussion of the subject, in the year 1778. They were then deciding on a question, implicating the American war—a war against the principle of which they had often protested, and, therefore, they thought they were supporting the same cause by deciding against the measure then proposed, and, without knowing it, confounded the means with

the end. In this view did it appear to Parliament who determined against these great men. But, supposing that the opposition of that day had prevailed, it would not go to vitiate the present measure, it being, of all others, the least analogous to it; for the subscription of 1778 was to be applied to such purposes as the King should think proper to direct, whereas the contribution now proposed was to be applied by Parliament to a particular object.—He then adverted to all the cases, of a similar nature, which had occurred since that period, and drew from them the strongest inferences in support of his argument.

Mr. Pitt said, that gentlemen talked loudly of liberty, while they seemed to be most willing to encroach on it, when the encroachment answered their own purposes. He knew, that a portion of individual liberty was often, of necessity, sacrificed for the general good; but it must be in cases where the general evil would be greater than the individual evil. In the present instance, the first liberty of the subject the right of disposing of his own property, was attempted to be wrested from him; while the general good would be promoted by the free exercise of that right, and by the unrestrained enjoyment of that liberty. He laid it down as a maxim, in the law and constitution of Eng

land, that every man had a right to apply any part of his property he pleased for any legal purpose, unless expressly prohibited by statute; and he maintained, that there was not, in the whole of our statute-book, one prohibition of subscriptions for carrying on a war. The bill of rights, he said, had no more application to this subject, than any other law in the statute-book; and, having said this, he disclaimed all intention of speaking with disrespect of that great and justly-revered law; or of any gentleman who might quote it. He thought, however, that it had been strangely misapplied.

It would have been a most extraordinary thing, indeed, if a bill, framed for the express purpose of asserting, vindicating, and guarding the rights of the people, had contained a clause for despoiling them of one of the most essential of those rights—the free disposal of their own property. And equally so, that a bill, which had for its object the preservation of the constitution, should have forbidden the people spontaneously to contribute any portion of their property for its support and protection,—though it affords the only security for their rights, their liberties, and their possessions.

To suppose danger to the constitution, from such contributions, is to admit the monstrous supposition, that the people would commit an

act of political suicide, by conspiring with the Crown for the destruction of their own freedom!

Mr. Pitt examined the different statutes against *benevolences*, and clearly shewed that they were really (what no one, who was acquainted with the history of the times in which they were enacted, could possibly be ignorant of) laws against exactions or extortion. The people had been compelled to contribute, and compulsory processes had been issued against them from the Exchequer, to exact that which was falsely and hypocritically denominated a free-will offering. He next argued the question on the ground of reason. An alarm had been professed at the proposed measure, because, it was asserted, it went to destroy the constitution, by trenching on its principles, in interfering with the functions of the House. He admitted, that the House of Commons were the guardians of the public purse, that nothing should be carried on, either in war or peace, without their knowledge, and that they were the channel through which the King must receive the necessary supplies. The dominion which the House of Commons exclusively possessed over the general wealth of the nation, was a wise provision to render the Executive Government dependent on Parliament, and, by that means, indirectly respon-

sible for the just discharge of their public duty. But would any man, he asked, seriously maintain, that the subscriptions in question interfered with that principle, or that they trenched on the constitutional control which the House of Commons had over the real and substantial supplies to be granted to the Executive power, so as to endanger the constitution itself?—The fact was, that, in numberless instances, the abstract right had been often intrenched upon; but such intrenchment had never yet raised apprehensions in any man's mind. It was, indeed, a strange chimerical mode of speaking, to say, that, at a moment when every thing in the circumstances of the times tended to impel people to opposite motives of action, they were likely to make the King independent, and that the people would conspire for the destruction of themselves, their property, and their constitution. The navy and army establishments amounted, in ordinary times, to four millions annually; in time of war, they rose much higher; yet, while it was argued, that the subscriptions must be inconsiderable and inadequate to any material purpose, the general tenour of their argument led to the supposition, that the voluntary contributions would be sufficient, not only for the ordinaries, but the extraordinaries also, immense as they were;—a supposition so absurd, that it was rather calculated to

excite pity and laughter, than deserving of any serious consideration.

He commented, towards the conclusion of his speech, with great strength, ability, and wisdom, on the absurdity of taking abstract principles as infallible guides to practice in political affairs. Cases, he observed, which, though extreme, were yet not physically impossible, might be adduced, *ad infinitum*, in order to extinguish all those principles of action which arise from experience and probability. In deciding on such extreme cases, the probability of their occurrence must be taken into the account; but what power that imagination could conceive would be safe, if that principle of suspicion were carried to the extent to which art and ingenuity might strain it? Objections might be urged on the dry, abstract, theoretical, point, while it was evident, that there existed no real, or even probable, grounds of danger; and when men were disposed to insist on the theoretic inconsistency of a subscription from individuals, while there existed a representative body for granting supplies, Mr. Pitt said, he would refer them to every period of our history, and then tell them—"My experience is a good argument against your theory."—It was not by attending to the dry, strict, abstract principles of a point, that a just conclusion was to be

formed on political subjects. Such subjects were not to be determined by mathematical accuracy. Wisdom is to be gained in politics; not by any one rigid principle, but by examining a number of incidents; by looking attentively at causes, and reflecting on the effects which they have produced; by comparing a number of events together, and by taking, as it were, an average of human affairs. This was the true way to become wise in politics: not by adopting that false philosophy which seeks perfection out of that which is imperfect in its nature; which refers all things to theory, nothing to practice; which rejects experience, and brings the principles of science to things not capable of receiving them; which substitutes visionary hypothesis for the solid test of experiment, and bewilders the human mind in a maze of opinions, when it should be employed in directing to action; and which would proceed, as it were *per saltum*, from the indulgence of theoretical systems to the execution of them. But the chasm, he justly remarked, was wide indeed between the practice and the imaginary point to which those alarmists would carry things. That pedant politician, who thought to make a political machine perfect in all its parts, and regular in all its movements, thought of that which could exist only in the imagination; the various checks and counter-

checks, by which he might hope to regulate its motions, and correct its aberrations, would serve only to clog its motions, impede its progress, and overload it with difficulties.

Mr. Pitt confessed, however, that, in the adoption of the present measure, he was governed, in some degree, by a principle of another kind. In contemplating the benefits likely to result from it, he could not help considering what sentiments it proclaimed, and what effects it would have on the minds and opinions of the world; and, though it had been contended, that it would tend to mark men out, and to raise invidious distinctions in society, he would say, that if it served the purpose of actual defence, on the one hand, or of intimidating and overawing the enemy, and of baffling their plans, on the other, it was not to be rejected because some persons were less alive than others to the good of the country. He regarded it as an act merely voluntary, having the sanction of Parliament, which mixed the zeal and warmth of individual will with the power of legal authority, and gave an energy which no law could impart;—as an act which interested the hearts of the inhabitants of the kingdom, and gave fresh vigour to the cause in which we were engaged, by shewing, that not only the Legislature, but also the individuals, of this country, were warm in the pursuit of the war, as involv-

ing every thing which was dear to man in a civilized state; and, therefore, he hoped and trusted it would succeed. Nor was it to England alone that this practice would be confined, for it would spread over the other parts of Europe, and tend to dispel the delusion which the present rulers of France, and their emissaries and agents, had been artfully endeavouring to excite in every part of that quarter of the globe; it would shew them, that the hopes held out that, if they invaded this country, they would find great numbers of followers and supporters, was a gross imposition on the credulity of the French, and a libel on the loyalty of the people of England. He concluded with repeating his assertion, that the bill was agreeable to the spirit of the constitution; and highly expedient under the circumstances of the country.—The bill then passed without a division.

The Opposition having proved unable to defeat the Minister, on this, their favourite, ground, resolved to make another attack without delay. Mr. Harrison was selected for the purpose; and the subject chosen was one which the party justly considered as admirably calculated to secure the popular prejudice in their favour, and to turn it against their opponents. They wisely thought, too, that a more fit season

could not be chosen for such a discussion, than the present, when the abuses of government, and the profligacy of placemen and pensioners, were the constant subject of declamation to all the patriotic reformers of the day. It might have occurred, indeed, to a genuine patriot, that, when the scale of democracy seemed to preponderate, it was his duty to throw what weight he could into the opposite scale, instead of contributing his influence to make it kick the beam.—But the only consideration which appears to have entered into the minds of the Opposition, at this period, was, by what means they could best injure the Minister in the public estimation, and promote the cause of his enemies, of whatever description. At least, their conduct was precisely such as it would have been, if they had been actuated, exclusively, by such motives.

The notable plan which Mr. Harrison proposed, was the abolition of certain places and pensions, the curtailment of others, and the reduction of the salaries of public offices.—He meant to leave untouched all sinecures under £200 per annum, and all efficient places under £500; but to tax all other salaries, in a given proportion, with the exception of those of the judges, ambassadors, and some few others. The only plausible reason which he attempted to

urge in defence of the scheme was, that, as a landed income of £5000 was, by the pressure of the times, reduced to £4000, there was no reason why those who subsisted on the public money should not submit to a similar reduction. —Two very obvious circumstances seem wholly to have eluded the vigilance of this acute statesman.—First, that the same cause which reduced the value of incomes derived from land, contributed to decrease the value of all other incomes, in, at least, an equal degree.—And, secondly, that those who subsisted on the public money, laboured hard to gain their subsistence, and were, at least, as well entitled to enjoy it in security, as the inheritor of land, who was indebted to the merit of his ancestors for the property which he enjoyed, and to the industry of the farmer for the produce which it yielded. But Mr. Harrison had not sagacity enough to cast even a flimsy veil over the real object of his motion, for he openly declared, that it was more particularly advisable to tax Ministers in this way, because, by feeling the smart of war themselves, they might be more readily inclined to free the nation from its curse. Admitting that the diminution of their salaries would have any influence on the conduct of Ministers, it surely might as well operate to prevent them from engaging in a war, however just, or how-

ever necessary for the honour and safety of the country, as induce them to accelerate its termination when once begun.—But such vulgar declamation was wholly unworthy of a serious answer.

It was reasonably contended, on the other side, that no money was so honourably acquired as that which was earned by public services; and that the men against whom this plan was meant to operate, as an exclusive tax, merited a very different distinction; — they sacrificed time and talents to their country, which, if devoted to any other pursuits, would procure them ample fortunes. As a measure of economy, it was pointedly ridiculed, as a poor and paltry attempt; while, considered in a more serious light, it was justly condemned as a direct invasion of the property of individuals, held, equally with landed estates, under sanction of the law.

The pretext of economy which was so strongly urged by the supporters of the motion, induced Mr. Rose to exhibit unequivocal proofs of the economical disposition of the Minister, in the reduction of expenses, by the abolition of some offices, and by the adoption of salutary reforms in the various departments of government, to the great advantage of the revenue. Mr. Fox, who spoke for a considerable time in

support of the motion, being himself in the very situation of the proposed objects of taxation, was reduced to the necessity of giving such an awkward turn to his argument, as exposed him to a most severe retort. He admitted that the efficient offices of state were, in general, not overpaid, and objected to the plan of interference with sinecure places held for a term of years, or for life, which he deemed equally sacred with any private property. It was not easy to perceive the justice of this distinction; for, to a common understanding, it would appear that sinecure places, which were not given as the reward of public services, were, of all places, those which had the least claim to exemption from any proposed tax. He was answered by Mr. Pitt, who, in one of the most ingenious speeches that man ever delivered, and of which no report, unfortunately, has been preserved, dissected Mr. Fox's arguments, one by one, and, with singular felicity, turned them all against himself.* He observed that,

* I was present during this discussion, and was astonished at the ingenuity displayed by Mr. Pitt in his answer to Mr. Fox. —I looked into the papers of the following day for an account of his speech, and was greatly disappointed at finding, that not only the particular expressions, and the turn of the argument, but even its very spirit and substance, had wholly escaped the reporters.

as Mr. Fox admitted that the offices in question were not overpaid even in time of peace, it was highly unjust to abridge their profits during war, when the labour of them was so greatly increased. In order to refute one argument of Mr. Fox, who had ascribed his support of the present measure to the adoption of the system of voluntary contributions, Mr. Pitt said it was only necessary to state its substance in other words—" That he would support a measure of which he disapproved to day, merely because another measure had been carried against him yesterday, and would balance the impropriety of raising voluntary contributions in the first instance, by compelling contributions in the second." Mr. Pitt reprobated the idea of having recourse to such means of supply; and observed, that the retrenchments which had been made in the public expenditure, during his administration, were not intended so much for a saving to the public, as to diminish the influence of the Crown.—Fifty members voted for the question, and one hundred and seventeen against it.

Having adopted the necessary measures for increasing the naval and military force, in order to prosecute the war with vigour and effect, Mr. Pitt deemed it expedient to enlarge the means of attack by embodying the numerous emi-

grants from France who had sought refuge in this country. Those gallant men, among whom was the flower of the French nobility, were, as might be supposed, most anxious to contribute their efforts for the demolition of a system which had produced the most destructive effects, and which, notwithstanding the partial support which it experienced from a small discontented party in Parliament, and from the disaffected out of it, was generally held in deserved execration. A bill was therefore prepared "To enable his Majesty "to employ subjects of France on the Conti-"nent of Europe, in the West Indies, Guern-"sey and Jersey, and other places." This bill, like every other measure proposed by the Minister, for humbling the power of revolutionary France, was strongly resisted by the Opposition. — Mr. Sheridan, in particular, taxed it with cruelty, for exposing men in battle, to whom, it was well known, their enemies would give no quarter. He asked whether their death would be revenged by retaliation on the French prisoners in our possession? — Mr. Burke having answered in the affirmative, Mr. Sheridan declaimed, with great violence, against what, by an equal perversion of language and of sentiment, he termed the barbarity of such a notion. It is by such language as this, by a spurious philanthropy,

which is nothing but cruelty in disguise, so frequently manifested, by their supporters, in foreign countries, that the regenerated French, who are, indisputably, the most barbarous and sanguinary people in the whole civilized world, have been encouraged to gratify those diabolical passions which the principles of their revolution either engendered or brought forth into action, and to slake their thirst for vengeance with the blood of the most virtuous part of their own countrymen, and of innocent strangers.—The impunity thus early secured to them, and for which the powers combined against them have much to answer, has led to the commission of more atrocious murders; to the perpetration of more acts of brutal revenge and wanton cruelty; to more extensive massacres; and to the destruction of more individuals, than have been witnessed, in the same space of time, from the creation to the present moment.—Men, who sink the senator in the partisan, and who are regardless of consequences, so that they can but foil a Minister, or embarrass a government, may embellish their speeches with popular professions, and high-sounding phrases of philanthropy. But it is the province of history to strip such orators of their tinsel coverings, and to exhibit them to posterity in their genuine

colours. The voice of truth will proclaim the principle of retaliation, so loudly reprobated, to be consistent alike with the rules of justice, and the precepts of scripture.—Its adoption is, in fact, an act of humanity; since its necessary tendency is, by the operation of fear, to prevent acts of cruelty, and to save the lives of men.—And, when no other measure will produce the same effect, it is not only justifiable to have recourse to it, but it becomes a duty to enforce it.

The bill was further opposed, as being impolitic and unconstitutional, and Mr. Whitbread, and some others, who joined in the opposition, censured ministers very pointedly, for their apparent astonishment at the objections which had been made to it, just as if it were a matter of course, and perfectly conformable to law, *to take into the service of this country an immense body of Roman Catholics, foreigners, and men who had taken no test whatever.* It was contended, that, by styling the emigrants "Subjects of France," Ministers had not only recognised the French republic, but had admitted the right of that government to treat them as rebels, if taken in arms. The effect of this wretched quibble, however, was soon done away by Mr. Pitt, who took an early opportunity, when the bill was in a com-

mittee, to substitute these words,— "Subjects of the late most Christian King," instead of those on which the quibble was built. On the third reading of this bill, the subject was more fully discussed than it had been before. Mr. Fox then took the lead in opposition to it, and accused the Ministers of having deserted the ground on which they had originally professed to act.—They took up arms to repel an aggression, and did not disclaim the idea of treating; but they had now plunged the country into a bloody and ruinous war, without a hope of release but from a wild and visionary project. By engaging the emigrants in their service, they had avowed their determination to overthrow the existing government; and, consequently, all our successes at sea, all our acquisitions in the East and West Indies had not the smallest tendency to hasten the return of peace,—nothing but the absolute conquest of France could effect it.

He compared the new government of France with the old, and gave a decided preference to the former, though a government more hostile to the liberty of the subject had never been framed by man.—He denied, with an equal regard to truth, the existence of any right to interfere with the internal concerns of that country, and professed to found his denial,

both on the ground of equity and on the positive law of nations. Alluding to Mr. Burke's defence of the system of retaliation, he deprecated the scenes of massacre and carnage that might ensue from such a warfare;—though the least attention to passing events in France might have convinced him that it could not possibly produce more massacres and carnage, than had been committed, without any such stimulus, every year, every month, and almost every day, since the first creation of that stupendous monument of human wisdom which had so forcibly extorted his applause and admiration. He inferred, from some events in our own history, and particularly in the two last rebellions, the justification of the French government in putting to death those whom they might take in arms against their country, although employed by foreign powers. Never were facts more grossly perverted, and never was inference so false and unfounded. Indeed, whether that inference be considered as calculated to deter the emigrants from entering into the service, or as an encouragement to the regicides to murder them, for it had an equal tendency both ways,—it was alike reprehensible. Will posterity believe, that any member of the British Senate could dare to contend, that rebels, who had deposed and murdered their lawful, and

unoffending, Sovereign, who had forcibly destroyed the constitution of their country, plundered and massacred it loyal inhabitants, and usurped the Supreme power, had thence acquired a legal possession of the sovereignty, and a right to put to death those subjects of the monarchy who had remained true to their oaths, and faithful to their allegiance, for endeavouring to recover the rights of the throne, which, they, in common with the rebels themselves, had sworn to defend, and their own plundered property, which had been wrested from them by the hand of violence?—To assert such a right, was to confound right and wrong, rebellion and loyalty, truth and perjury! It was to give the attributes of law and justice to fraud, violence, rapine, and murder!—But Mr. Fox did not stop even here; he asserted, that even if the emigrants should succeed in their efforts to restore the monarchy, they would turn their arms against us, in the event of any application for indemnity on our part.

This virulent declamation was satisfactorily answered by Mr. Dundas and Mr. Burke.—The former depicted, in its true colours, the hideous system of the French government; and having shewn that it was equally hostile to the safety of other states, and to the happiness of its own people, maintained the necessity of

attempting to destroy it. And he truly observed, that no means were so likely to produce this desirable end as the collection, under one banner, of those unfortunate sufferers, whose zeal must be kindled by a hatred of their oppressors, by a consciousness that they sought for a restoration of their honours, their property, and their families, and that they were actuated by a sincere love of their country, and were anxious to restore to it the blessings of peace, loyalty, and religion.

Mr. Dundas shewed, that the right of interference with the government of other countries, when necessary for the security of our own, which Mr. Fox had so peremptorily denied, was explicitly asserted by the best writers on the law of nations, particularly by Mr. Fox's own favourite author, Vattel.*—

* I had formerly occasion to notice Mr. Fox's duplicity, in arguing this question of interference, in my comments on Lord Lauderdale's letters to the Peers of Scotland.---" The authority of Vattel you must allow to be decisive, particularly since it was quoted by Mr. Fox, in support of his own opinion on the question.---That opinion went to the establishment of the general principle, that one state has no right to interfere in the government of another state,---a principle, the justice of which no man can deny, and which, of course, so eminent a writer as Vattel could not fail to confirm. But Mr. Fox, with a degree of insincerity which might, perhaps, be excu-

It was further to be observed, that those writers speak of interference only in time of peace;—they had no notion of a doubt to be raised about it in the case of a hostile state; much less of one from which an unprovoked aggression had been received, and whose aim, and principle, it was to excite rebellion amongst all its neighbours. Mr. Dundas, adverting to the subject of retaliation, expressed his unwillingness to lay down any abstract rule; the exercise of the right must be left to the circumstances which called for it. Generals, possessed of as much wisdom and humanity as any man could boast of, had acknowledged the

sable in an advocate pleading in a court of justice, but which certainly was unpardonable in the more liberal and dignified discussions of a British senate, omitted to notice Vattel's exception to the general rule, which immediately applied to the point in question :--- " If then," says Vattel, " there be " any where a nation of a *restless* and *mischievous* disposition, " always ready to *injure others*, to traverse their designs, and " TO RAISE DOMESTIC TROUBLES, it is not to be doubted, that " all have a right to join, in order to repress, chastise, and " put it ever after out of his power to injure them."*--A more complete justification of the conduct of England, and of the other Belligerent powers, could not have been offered. It is evident, that the right, here asserted by Vattel, is founded on the natural principle of self-preservation."---*Letter to the Earl of Lauderdale.* P. 85, 86.

* Vattel, Book 2. Chap. IV.

necessity of putting a stop to cruelty by retaliation; but it was neither wise nor necessary to reduce this point to defined or general principles.—He denied the imputed inhumanity of accepting the proffered services of the emigrants, who knew the value of what they had lost, and the prospect there was of regaining it;—their desire to serve was the result of free deliberation; and every one must applaud the wisdom and magnanimity of their choice.

He defended our expeditions against the colonial possessions of our enemies, on the ground that, by the loss of them, they were deprived of their resources.—He was less successful, however, in vindicating the Ministers against the charge of impolicy in forbearing to send timely assistance to the royalists in La Vendée; for there can be little doubt that, if such assistance had been afforded, early in the year 1793, more would have been done towards the destruction of the Republican government than by the combined efforts of the confederate armies on the frontiers.

Mr. Burke entered more at large upon the defence of the *lex talionis*, which, he affirmed, was part of the law of nations, as founded on the law of nature;—retaliation was the punishment provided for the infraction of that law, and to inflict it, under certain circumstances,

was as necessary to humanity as it was to justice. God forbid, he said, that the authors of murder should not find it recoil on their own heads! The application of this principle must indeed be modified by prudence, the essential constituent and regulator of all virtue; but this practical restriction left the principle itself unimpaired. The bill was warmly supported by all those members who had dismissed Mr. Fox and his associates from their party, and who thought the measure the most efficacious of any which had yet been adopted for aiming a vital blow at that Jacobin government, for whose welfare and success the Foxites betrayed such a feeling concern, and such a lively sensibility. *Seven* peers only could be found, in the Upper House, to oppose the principle of the bill, which was, of course, passed by a great majority.

While the projects of the Minister, for the support of the war, underwent this ample discussion, other subjects, either immediately connected with it, or made to rise out of it, were brought into debate, by the active Members of the Opposition. In the month of February, (the 17th) the Marquis of Lansdowne had made a motion for an address to the King, beseeching him to avow his disposition to treat with France for peace, on liberal and disinterested terms. His lordship drew a most

gloomy picture of the state of the coalition against France, which he represented as a most heterogeneous composition, utterly inadequate to the attainment of any of the professed objects of the war. He was supported by the Duke of Grafton, and the Earls of Guildford and Lauderdale; and successfully opposed by Earls Fitzwilliam and Caernarvon, the Duke of Leeds, Lords Sydney, Kinnoul, and Grenville. A declaration of Barrere, in the National Convention, "that England wished for peace; "that England shall have peace; but that it "must be by sacrificing her constitution," was quoted by the opposers of the motion, as fully expressive of the disposition and views of the French government, respecting this country. The motion was rejected by 103 votes against 13.

A motion, similar in effect, though more direct in expression, was made by Mr. Whitbread, in the Lower House, early in the ensuing month; (on the 7th of March) this gentleman contended, that however just and necessary the war might be, still the alliances which we had contracted were highly ruinous and impolitic. He, therefore, proposed to present a remonstrance to the King, against all the treaties entered into with the confederate powers since the commencement of the war, (including, of

course, that treaty with Sardinia, of which the House had recently declared its approbation) and for advising his Majesty to extricate himself from those engagements. In the course of this discussion, the most bitter invectives were lavished on the allies of Great Britain, while all the atrocious proceedings of the French government did not extort a single animadversion. The motion was resisted by Mr. Pitt, as being nothing less than a motion for peace; for so long as the war continued, it would be indispensably necessary to form as strong and as numerous alliances as we possibly could.—With respect to the particular merits of those treaties, by which the co-operation of other powers had been secured, no arguments had been advanced to show, that the terms were inconsistent with approved practice, or with that line of policy which had received the sanction of the House. Complaints had, indeed, been preferred against particular parts of the conduct of our allies, some of them previous to the war, and others during the war. This conduct, especially in the instance of Po[illegible]d, he was by no means willing to defend; but the question was, whether we should allow one act of injustice to deprive us of the aid of those powers, in resisting the universal, systematic, injustice of our enemy?—

Whether Great Britain, the soul of a confederacy on which all our hopes depended, should herself, from motives of scrupulous delicacy, dissolve it at a time when it was most her interest to strengthen and cement it?—It had been falsely stated, that we were bound, by our treaties, to act with this confederacy, until each member of it had declared himself satisfied; whereas, on the contrary, it was provided, that whenever the places taken by the enemy should be restored to their original possessors, either party should be at liberty to conclude a peace. As to the views of our allies, concerning the future government of France, whatever they might be, Mr. Pitt expressly declared, that we were engaged in a contest only so far as related to our own defence. On a division, there appeared for the motion, 26,—against it, 138. A similar motion was soon after rejected in the House of Lords, by a majority of 96 to 9.

Having been foiled, in all their attempts, to procure a change in the general system, the Opposition now assumed a more limited ground of complaint, and directed their attention to the imprisoned patriots of France, who had been seized, in 1792, on the territory of Liege, within the Austrian posts. On the 17th of March, General Fitzpatrick moved, in the House of Commons, an address to the

Throne, representing that the detention of General La Fayette, Alexander Lameth, Bureau de Puzy, and Latour Maubourg, (three members of the Constituent Assembly, who were arrested at the same time) was injurious to his Majesty, and the cause of his allies; and humbly beseeching his Majesty to intercede for their deliverance, in such a manner as to his royal wisdom should seem most proper. General Fitzpatrick, who had lived in habits of intimacy with La Fayette, pronounced a strong panegyric on his unfortunate friend, who, according to his representation, was a paragon of honour, and a model of patriotism.—From his conduct, in the French Revolution, strange to say, the General inferred, that he was a firm friend to his murdered Monarch, and a determined enemy to the Jacobin Government!—The motion was seconded by Colonel Tarleton, and supported by Mr. Fox, and the other members of the Opposition. But the House did not at all enter into their feelings, on the subject, nor yet consider the character of La Fayette in the same point of view with themselves. We had, however, no participation in the arrest of these patriots, which took place before we were engaged in the war; and, consequently, we could have neither right nor pretext to interpose in their behalf. It was

pertinently asked, on what ground we could pretend to interfere?—What charter could we produce for being guardians of the consciences and councils of the potentates of Europe?—And it was aptly remarked, as being singular, that this recommendation should come from those who denied the right of interfering in the affairs of France; who, when they heard of the murder and imprisonment of thousands in Paris, and were themselves daily witnesses of the afflictions of the emigrant priests and nobles, could suppress their philanthropy, because it was wrong to meddle with the concerns of an independent state.

Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham were particularly distinguished, in this debate, for the keen irony, and happy sarcasm, which they directed against those spurious philanthropists, who could contemplate, with calm indifference, the murder and misery of persecuted royalists, while their most tender sensibility was excited by the sufferings of patriotic reformers, whose wild and visionary schemes had brought their Monarch to the scaffold, and their country to desolation and wretchedness! In the course of their argument, the opposition had laid a great stress on the inconsistency of guaranteeing the Constitution of 1789 to the inhabitants of Toulon, while its founder, La Fayette, was con-

signed to a prison. Mr. Pitt, therefore, entered into an explanation of the transaction at Toulon.—He stated, that Lord Hood had promised protection to the inhabitants, if they would make an explicit declaration in favour of monarchy. They declared for the Constitution of 1789, and begged him to keep the place in trust for Louis XVII.—He did so;—and the restoration of the place, at the conclusion of the war, was the extent of the engagement into which he entered. With regard to the pretended attachment of the royalists to La Fayette, there was no man, he believed, who less possessed the esteem of that party, and no man, certainly, less deserved it than he who first preached the doctrine of the sacred duty of insurrection against his Sovereign. Forty-eight members voted for the motion, and one hundred and fifty-five against it.

A motion, however, not so easily resisted, and supported by arguments much more plausive, and even cogent, was brought forward, on the 10th of April, by Major Maitland, respecting the failures and disasters of the last campaign, at Dunkirk and at Toulon.—He imputed our want of success to a departure from the plan, originally settled by the Congress at Antwerp, for concentrating the combined force; the first instance of which departure was exhi-

bited in the detached enterprize of the Duke of York against Dunkirk, which took forty thousand men from the Prince of Cobourg's army, and so compelled him eventually to raise the siege of Maubenge.—Nor were the promptitude and dispatch, which all such detached expeditions imperatively require, displayed on the present occasion. An unaccountable delay of four weeks took place after the surrender of Valenciennes. The Duke of York appeared before Dunkirk on a given day, when the gunboats from England were appointed to meet him.—But through a culpable neglect, in the departments of the Ordnance and the Admiralty, not one of them appeared.—The consequence was the defeat of our troops, followed by a retreat, attended with the loss of stores, cannon, and ammunition.

In regard to Toulon, he accused Lord Hood of having gained possession of the place on condition of restoring the constitution of 1789, and of having subsequently changed the terms, by promising them, in his declaration, only such a government as should be agreed on, which subjected them to the revival of their ancient despotism. He then landed only 1800 men to protect a line of fifteen miles against 10,000 men; and yet, notwithstanding the state of "comfortable security" in which Lord Mul-

grave had professed to feel himself when he took the command, with an addition of 2000 men, he was soon after unable to maintain himself, with 15,000, against the attacks of 35,000. Lord Hood was further charged with having, in the midst of these transactions, of his own accord, and without any instructions, sent four ships of the line to Brest, as a present to the enemy; and with having, at last, made a precipitate and shameful retreat, leaving thousands of the loyal inhabitants to glut the vengeance of the conquerors.

The *facts* advanced in opposition to these charges, which no reasoning, and nothing but *facts*, could repel, were these:—That the attack of Dunkirk was undertaken with the full concurrence of the Duke of York, and of the other commanders on the Continent, who approved both of the time and mode of its execution. That its capture was an object highly desirable, and was prevented solely by the uncommon efforts of the enemy, who, with surprising expedition, collected an immense force, sufficient to beat the covering army, under Marshal Freytag; to which circumstance alone, and not to the want of naval co-operation, was the failure of the attempt to be attributed.—No blame could attach to the Ordnance Department, for the gun-boats were fitted out with the

greatest possible expedition, and arrived at the place of destination only two days after the appointed time. The retreat from Dunkirk was stated to be orderly and slow; the number of cannon left behind was only thirty-eight, and all of iron; and the diversion which this expedition created, produced the fall of Quesnoy.

But, notwithstanding this defence, the expedition to Dunkirk appears to have been ill-conceived, and worse conducted. The importance of keeping the combined army united, in order to make the desired impression on the French, who always acted in one immense and compact body, was self-evident; and the separation of 40,000 men could not fail to fetter its operations, and to defeat its grand object. Admitting, however, what cannot be denied, that the acquisition of Dunkirk was most desirable, in order to secure a safe port for our vessels, and an open communication with the Continent, which might, with proper precautions, be defended against any force which could be brought against it, it was an operation that ought to have been executed as soon as conceived; not a moment, at least, should have been lost, after the reduction of Valenciennes, in making the attempt; and it should have been made with a force amply sufficient to ensure its success. All other objects should, for the

moment, have been sacrificed to this, to which the undivided attention of the whole army should have been directed.—But, by the injudicious plan of carrying on offensive operations in two different quarters, at the same time, the allies were defeated at both points. Besides, by the tardiness of the proceedings after the attack was begun, the enemy had ample time to throw what reinforcements he chose into the town, to adopt every measure of defence, and to collect an immense force, sufficient to overwhelm, as it were, the besieging and covering armies; whereas, it is certain that, when the British army first approached the place, it was very badly provided with all the means of resistance, and would, in all probability, have been unable to withstand a prompt and vigorous assault.

In answer to the charges on the subject of Toulon, it was observed, on the part of Ministers, that almost the whole of that plan was conducted without any communication with the cabinet; and that the speedy collection of 17,000 men, in the midst of other military operations of great importance, was a sufficient proof of their zeal and diligence in promoting its success. Lord Mulgrave, on his part, denied that the restoration of the constitution of 1789 was understood, by either party, as a definitive arrangement. In respect to the siege, instead

of a line of fifteen miles, as asserted, the farthest post was not two miles distant from the centre of Toulon;—and his situation was such as fully to justify the expression of his security at the time when it was used. Cataux's army, though amounting to 10,000 men, consisted of the worst troops in France. Lyons had not then yielded to the authority of the Convention;—and he was given to expect a co-operation on the part of the Piedmontese general, De Vins. Still, though disappointed in his expectations, had the garrison of Toulon been wholly composed of British troops,—he was confident of his ability to hold the place till that very hour.

Mr. Pitt undertook the defence of Lord Hood against the charges which affected him personally.—The four ships which had been sent to Brest contained six thousand republican seamen, who were riotous, ungovernable, and, avowedly, hostile to the English; and it was thence absolutely necessary to send away one part of the fleet in order to secure the other. The evacuation of the town, and the destruction of the ships and magazines, were executed in a manner which claimed the highest praise;—and he averred, in the most solemn manner, that not a single person was left behind who wished to leave the place. As to the massacres which followed, they had been so general throughout

France, as to afford a strong presumption that attachment to the English was not, in this particular instance, the cause of them. The House were satisfied with these reasons, and rejected the motion for an inquiry by a hundred and sixty-eight votes against thirty-five.

A new subsidiary treaty had lately been concluded with Prussia, who had evinced a strong disposition to desert the confederacy which she had been the most anxious to promote.—That it was wise to prevent this desertion by pecuniary sacrifices, in the present state of affairs on the Continent, must be obvious to all, who consider the stake for which Great Britain and her Allies were contending; that it was more consistent too, both with policy and with economy, to pay for his troops than to raise men at home for the same purpose, is equally manifest. By this treaty, the Prussian Monarch engaged to supply 62,000 men, to co-operate with the Allies, on condition of receiving the sum of £400,000 for their equipment, and a further sum of £50,000 a month, during their service; which, with other necessary expenses, would form a total of £1,800,000, of which the States-General, who were parties to the treaty, had agreed to pay £400 000.

This treaty, when submitted to Parliament, was strongly opposed in both Houses; in the

Upper House, however, only six peers divided against it. It was discussed, in the Lower House, on the 30th of April, when it was defended by Mr. Pitt, chiefly on the two grounds above stated—the economy of the arrangement, and the propriety of employing foreign troops in preference to British on such a service. On the other hand, both the policy and the economy of the measure were impeached by the Opposition, who contended that we were paying the King of Prussia for fighting his own battles; that, compared with the subsidy to Sardinia, the sum to be advanced to him was exorbitant; and that, by this step, he had ceased to be a principal in the war. But, however reprehensible the conduct of the King of Prussia might be, and unquestionably was, the true point for consideration was, whether, in the actual state of the war, it was prudent and politic to pay for his support, which by no other means could be ensured. The House decided that it was, and thirty-two members in vain protested against this decision.

The eccentric conduct of the noble president of the Revolution Society, who had adopted all the wild and destructive notions of the French revolutionists, had manifested itself in various ways, and on various occasions; but in no instance had it assumed a more marked

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and decisive character, than in a long speech which he delivered in the House of Lords, on the 4th of April, when he loudly condemned the war, reprobated the *cruel* and *horrid* object of it—the restoration of Monarchy in France; and was guilty of a most horrible perversion of scripture, by quoting nearly the whole of the eighth chapter of the First Book of Samuel, in order to prove that Kings were considered by the Sacred Writers, and by God himself, as a curse upon mankind! In such violent and indecent terms was the resolution drawn up, which he introduced at the close of his speech, that the Lord Chancellor, with the unanimous approbation of the House, declined to read the preamble; and declared, that if the noble Earl had used the same language in any other place, it *would have called for exemplary punishment!*

The historian would ill discharge his duty, if he suffered such a declaration to pass *sub silentio.* That every possible allowance is to be made for unguarded expressions used, in the heat of debate, by members of the Great Council of the State, the freedom of debate, so essential to the preservation of constitutional freedom, imperiously requires; but that any member of either House should be allowed to commit a deliberate breach of the laws, and

to utter sentiments, and to use language, coolly and spontaneously, not in a reply, but on a subject purposely introduced by himself, which would expose any other person to a criminal prosecution, it is impossible to admit. The rights and privileges of the members of both Houses of Parliament are sufficiently extensive, and defined with sufficient clearness; but without a gross perversion of terms it is not possible to give such a latitude of comprehension to the "freedom of debate," which is one of their undoubted privileges, secured to them by their Sovereign, at the opening of every Parliament, as to include the right of uttering a gross libel, not extorted by the remarks of others, not provoked by any discussion calculated to produce warmth and irritation, but a cold, premeditated libel, which would subject any other person to exemplary punishment. There is no law to justify such an exemption;—it is repugnant to justice,—and at variance with the spirit and principles of the British constitution. Neither the end for which the freedom of debate was originally sanctioned, nor the object which it is intended to secure, could justify its extension to the unwarrantable conduct of Earl Stanhope on the present occasion;—whose words ought certainly to have been taken down for the purpose of instituting some ulterior proceeding against him.

Such, however, was the indignation of the House, on hearing this infamous resolution read, that Lord Grenville said he would not insult the understandings of their Lordships, nor his own, by entering into any argument against it. And, after it had been negatived by every voice in the House, except Lord Stanhope's, he said that, as the object was evidently to place the language on record, he hoped to defeat it by moving, that the resolution be expunged from the journals of the House. Lord Stanhope's remonstrances against this motion were vain, and it passed without a dissentient voice.—But three days after, a Scottish Peer was found, to adopt the sentiments of his Lordship, and to censure the House for their conduct. It will easily be imagined that this Peer was the Earl of Lauderdale, the friend of Brissot. He complained that the privileges of the House had been grossly violated by the omission of Lord Stanhope's preamble, when the resolution was read from the Chair; and, after such declaration on the subject, he moved, "That every motion "proposed by any Lord of Parliament, and "given to the Speaker of that House, ought "to be just in the words given by the mover; "and the question of *content* or *not content* "decided upon it in that form." This, as a general proposition, was admitted to be a tru-

ism; but it was contended, at the same time, that the House had a discretionary power to alter the words, or form, of any motion, at the suggestion of the Chair; and that, in the present instance, this power was exercised for the approbation of the House was unequivocally expressed. To get rid of the question, therefore, without affecting the principle, a motion for adjournment was made and carried.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Increased audacity of the Seditious Clubs—General meeting of the London Corresponding Society—Seditious resolutions of the Society for constitutional information—Inflammatory address of the Corresponding Society—Indicate the necessity of redress, and the means of obtaining it—Resolve to assemble a General Convention of the People—This address approved, and circulated by the Constitutional Society—Committees appointed, and seditious publications distributed—Public Meetings—Means adopted for supplying the disaffected with Arms—The Secretaries, and several Members of the Societies, are apprehended, and committed for trial—Their papers and books laid before the House of Commons—A committee appointed to examine them—First report of the Committee brought up by Mr. Pitt—His speech on the subject—He traces the origin and progress of the Societies—Their connection with France—With the British Convention at Edinburgh—Proposed Convention intended to supersede the Parliament, and to exercise full Legislative powers—Mr. Pitt moves for leave to bring in a Bill to enable his Majesty to arrest and detain all persons suspected of treasonable conspiracies for a limited time—Opposed by Mr. Fox—He defends the Societies as friends of peace—Maintains the legality of their conduct—Approves of a Convention—Considers the Bill as destructive of the Constitution—Is followed by Mr. Grey and Mr. Sheridan—The latter calls the Secret Committee, *the Committee of Public Safety*, and styles Mr. Pitt, *the British Barrere*—Motion carried by two hundred and one votes

to thirty-nine—Bill opposed on the third reading—Mr. Grey's Speech—Vindicates the conduct of the Societies—Abuses Mr. Pitt—Mr. Pitt vindicated from Mr. Grey's charge of duplicity and apostacy—False assertions of the opposition corrected by Mr. Dundas—Mr. Sheridan threatens to desert his duty in Parliament if the Bill passes—Mr. Windham ridicules the arguments of opposition, and calls them *a Committee of Jacobins*, and *Partisans of Anarchy*—Angry Speech of Mr. Fox—Avows his preference of *the most unjust peace* over *the most just war*—Regards the Bill as holding out encouragement to our foreign and domestic enemies—Bill defended by Mr. Pitt—The fallacy and evil tendency of Mr. Fox's arguments demonstrated—The Seditious Clubs entertain a different opinion of the Bill from that *avowed* by Mr. Fox—Bill passed by one hundred and forty-six to twenty-eight votes—Carried in the House of Peers by one hundred and eight to nine—Second report of the Secret Committee—Joint address of the two Houses on the same—Mr. Sheridan proposes a Bill for enabling Roman Catholics to hold commissions in the Army and Navy, by abolishing the existing test, and by substituting a new oath in its stead—Mr. Dundas moves the previous question, which is carried without a division—Mr. Fox expresses his approbation of the abolition of all tests—Lord Hawkesbury's Bill for enforcing the Navigation Laws—Prosperous state of commerce—Increase of Shipping and Seamen—Indian Budget opened by Mr. Dundas—Increased prosperity of the East India Company—Resolutions moved by Mr. Fox, condemning the war, and censuring the conduct of Ministers—Contends for the impolicy of demolishing the system of Jacobinism, without having some adequate substitute prepared—Magnifies the resources of France, and depreciates those of Great Britain—Encourages the Seditious Clubs to continue their meetings—Recommends an immediate negotiation for peace—Is supported by Mr. Sheridan, who

declares all the traitorous designs, imputed by the Secret Committee to the Clubs, to be *fabulous plots*, and *forged conspiracies*—The Committee vindicated by Mr. Pitt against the false aspersions of Mr. Sheridan—Mr. Pitt is called to order—Unsteady conduct of the Speaker—Mr. Pitt answers Mr. Fox—Proves him to have contradicted his own avowed principles on the question of interference—Previous question carried by two hundred and eight against fifty-seven—Similar resolutions moved, and rejected, in the House of Peers—The leaders of the Whig Party accept situations under government—Their conduct explained and defended—Attacked by Mr. Sheridan—His panegyric on Mr. Fox—Its value estimated—Mr. Pitt's Speech—Exposes the fallacy of Mr. Sheridan's statements—Ridicules the notion of his own unpopularity in America—Expresses a hope that he may be always as unpopular with Jacobins as Mr. Sheridan is popular with them—Opposition to Jacobinism the best basis of popularity—Mr. Pitt explains the grounds of the union between the Whig-leaders and the Ministry—Vindicates their principles, and unfolds their policy—Parliament prorogued—View of the conduct of opposition during the Session—Its tendency to inspirit the enemy and to encourage the disaffected—Probable motives and designs of Mr. Fox—Contrast between his conduct and that of Mr. Pitt.

[1794.] The conviction of the persons tried for sedition, in Scotland, far from having the effect of stopping the progress of disaffection in the southern parts of the island, seems to have inspired its votaries with fresh confidence, and with greater boldnesss;—at least, such must be supposed to have been the case, if their disposition were to be inferred from their

language in private, and their professions in public. The leaders of the two great Societies, in London, the Constitutional and the Corresponding, directed their aspiring views to nothing less than the formation of a popular legislature, not only distinct from, but directly opposed to, the constitutional legislature. On the 20th of January, the London Corresponding Society had a public meeting, and a public dinner, in announcing which to their members and adherents they endeavoured to impress on their minds the necessity of some strong and decisive resolutions. In the letter which their Secretary addressed to the Secretary of the Constitutional Society, it was observed—"It "is now time for us to do something worthy of "men;—the brave defenders of liberty, south "of the English Channel, are performing "wonders,—driving their enemies before them, "like chaff before the whirlwind!" And the Constitutional Society, in certain resolutions, passed on the 17th of January, compared the Scottish judges, who had convicted their friends, to Judge Jefferey's, and threatened him with a similar fate.*

* These resolutions, which were passed after the conviction of the persons tried for sedition in Scotland, speak a language, at once so bold and so plain, as to remove every doubt as to the intentions of those who framed them, from the mind of scepticism itself.—"Resolved, that law ceases to be an object of "obedience, whenever it becomes an instrument of oppression."

At a meeting of the Corresponding Society, which was most numerously attended, a spirit, perfectly conformable with the views of those

They had repeatedly declared, that the prosecutions and sentences for seditious practices were gross acts of oppression; and, therefore, it follows, of necessity, that, in their estimation, the time had actually come, when they were exempted from all obedience to the laws.

" Resolved, that we call to mind, with the deepest satis-
" faction, the merited fate of the infamous Jefferies, once Lord
" Chief Justice of England, who, at the æra of the glorious
" revolution, for the many iniquitous sentences which he had
" passed, was torn to pieces by a brave and injured people.

" Resolved, that those who imitate his example deserve
" his fate.

" Resolved, that the Tweed, though it may divide coun-
" tries, ought not, and does not, make a separation between
" those principles of common severity, in which Englishmen
" and Scotchmen are equally interested; that injustice in Scot-
" land is injustice in England; and that the safety of English-
" men is endangered, whenever their brethren in Scotland,
" *for a conduct which entitles them to the approbation of all wise,*
" *and the support of all brave, men,* are sentenced to Botany
" Bay;---a punishment hitherto inflicted only on felons.

" Resolved, that we see with regret, but we see without
" fear, that the period is fast approaching, when the liberties of
" Britons must depend not upon reason, to which they have
" long appealed, not on their powers of expressing it, but on
" their firm and undaunted resolution to oppose tyranny by the
" same means by which it is executed."

This resolution contains a direct and explicit threat to oppose the laws by force.---Reason and argument having, according to them, failed to produce the desired effect, recourse must be had to means of compulsion.

" Resolved, that we approve of the conduct of the British
" Convention, who, though assailed by force, have not been
" answered by arguments; and who, unlike the members of a

who had called it, was displayed; a violent address to the people of Great Britain and Ireland, containing a long detail of imaginary grievances, including the Irish Convention Act, and the suppression of the Scotch Convention, was read, approved, and 10,000 copies of it ordered to be printed and circulated. In this address, language was used too plain to be misunderstood, and unfolding views which admitted not of misconception or doubt. Its framers taught their English followers to believe, that the same persecution which the *patriots* of Scotland and Ireland had experienced would be extended to them.—It was one and the same corrupt and corrupting influence which now domineered in Ireland, Scotland, and England. Could it be believed that those who had sent virtuous Irishmen and Scotchmen, fettered with felons, to Botany Bay, did not meditate, and would not attempt, to send them to the same place?—Or, if they had not just cause to apprehend the same inhuman treatment; if, instead of the most imminent danger, they were in perfect safety, from it, should they not disdain to enjoy any liberty, or privilege, what-

" certain assembly, have no interest distinct from the common " body of the people.

" Resolved, that a copy of the above resolutions be trans- " mitted to Citizen Skirving, Secretary to the British Conven- " tion, who is now imprisoned under colour of law in the " Talbooth of Edinburgh."---*First Report, Com. of Sec.* P. 11, 12.

ever, in which their honest Irish and Scotch brethren did not equally, and as fully, participate with them? Their cause, then, was the same with their own; and it was both their duty and their interest to stand or fall together. The Irish Parliament, and the Scotch Judges, actuated by the same English influence, had brought them directly to the point. There was no further step beyond that which they had taken. They were at issue. They must now choose, at once, either liberty or slavery for themselves and their posterity. Would they wait till *barracks* were erected in every village, and till *subsidized* Hessians and Hanoverians were upon them?

Having thus insisted on the necessity of redress, they next proceeded to consider the question, which they supposed might naturally occur to their followers,—by what means was redress to be sought?—To this they answered, that men in a state of civilized society were bound to seek redress of grievances from the laws, as long as any redress could be obtained by the laws. But the common master whom they served (whose law was a law of liberty, and whose service was perfect freedom) had taught them not to expect to gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. They must have redress from *their own laws*, and not from the laws of their plunderers, enemies, and oppres-

sors. *There was no redress for a nation, circumstanced as they were, but in a fair, free, and full representation of the people.*

It was here explicitly avowed and maintained, that their present state was a state of slavery; that they had a right to assemble a National Convention; and that the suppression of such illegal meeting, and the punishment of its leaders, were acts of tyranny which justified resistance;—that it was necessary to seek redress, not, however, from the existing laws, but from laws of their own, to be enacted by some legislative body of their own creation; and which could not, of course, be created without the utter destruction of the present constitution. They also resolved, that the general Committee of the Society should meet every day during the sitting of Parliament, in order to watch its' proceedings, and the conduct of the government.—And that, upon the first introduction of any bill, or motion, hostile to the freedom of the people,—such as, for landing foreign troops in Great Britain, or Ireland, for proclaiming martial law, or for preventing the people from meeting in societies for constitutional information, or any other *innovation* of a similar nature,—the general Committee should issue summonses to the delegates of each division, and also to the

Secretaries of the different Societies *affiliated* and *corresponding* with their society, immediately to assemble a *general convention of the people*, to be holden at such place, and in such manner, as should be specified, by the Committee, in their summons.

The society for constitutional information gave their formal assent and sanction to these proceedings; and, on the 24th of January, resolved, that the seditious address, which they termed EXCELLENT, should be inserted in their book of minutes, and the King's speech to *his* Parliament immediately under it. Committees of co-operation were appointed for more closely uniting the two societies; and as they inferred the fears of government from its apparent supineness, they grew bolder in their language, and became more explicit and determined in their threats. They called in the aid of the press—established a "London Corresponding Society's Magazine," for the promulgation of their principles; and circulated hand-bills, songs, and cheap publications, of every description, without number. They devoted several political characters, and Mr. Pitt at the head of them, to popular vengeance; they vowed the destruction of the King, the Royal Family, the Nobility, and the Episcopacy;—and, at their meetings, talked of a revolutionary tribunal, as the

only court adapted to the present state of the country. They encouraged the idea of assembling a National Convention, on a more extensive scale, to be formed of delegates from all the popular clubs; and to be assembled on a central spot, which was already determined.

The Society of Friends of the People expressed their disapprobation of this last proposal, but the plan was, nevertheless, pursued with undiminished zeal, and unabated ardour. Public meetings were called in the open air; the fields, in the vicinity of the metropolis, became the scenes of political debate;—and democratic orators were sent to enlighten the manufacturers of Sheffield, Leeds, and Wakefield.—Resistance to government was plainly and strongly enforced, in harangues, peculiarly calculated to mislead and inflame the minds of the ignorant multitude; orders were given for making a large quantity of pikes;—and methods were employed, though not to any extent, for training men to the use of arms. At this period, the hopes of the disaffected were raised to the highest pitch. They conceived that government was awed into inactivity; and they inferred, however unjustly, certainly not unnaturally, nor illogically, from the language and conduct of the Opposition, that they were extremely well disposed to favour their cause.

Government, however, though apparently passive, were not idle. They had closely watched all their proceedings, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to make them feel the vengeance of the law. Having at length obtained, as they thought, sufficient proof to convince the public, and to establish the guilt of the offenders, Ministers resolved to act. A considerable number of military weapons were seized in Edinburgh; and, in London, Hardy, the Shoemaker, and Adams, the secretaries to the two leading societies, were apprehended, and their books and papers secured. From the contents of these documents, warrants were issued for the arrest of several others persons; and, after being examined by the Privy Council, the following were committed for trial:—Thomas Hardy, and Daniel Adams, Mr. John Horne Tooke, the Reverend Jeremiah Joyce, Chaplain and Secretary to Lord Stanhope, and tutor to his eldest son; John Thelwall, a political lecturer, and a most active member of the London Corresponding Society; John Augustus Bonney, an Attorney; and John Richter and John Lovett.

On the same day (the 12th of May) on which these persons were apprehended, Mr. Dundas brought down to the House of Commons, a message from his Majesty, informing

the House, that sc rious practices had been carried on, to an alarming extent, by certain seditious societies in London, in correspondence with societies in different parts of the country, tending to subvert the laws and constitution of the kingdom, and introductory of the system of anarchy prevailing in France; and concluding with a recommendation to the House to adopt such measures as to them might appear necessary.

The next day the books and papers of the societies, which had been seized, were laid before the House, and, on the motion of Mr. Pitt, were referred to a committee of secrecy, in conformity with a precedent, supplied in the case of Layer's plot, in 1722. Mr. Fox's *constitutional* vigilance and jealousy led him to enquire by what means the papers had been obtained, reminding the House, that it had been declared, in Wilkes's case, that the seizure of papers, except for treason or felony, was illegal.—He obtained, however, a satisfactory answer from Mr. Dundas, who informed him that the warrants were granted for treasonable practices.

The committee was chosen by ballot, on the 14th of May; and, on the 16th, Mr. Pitt brought up the first report, which contained a history of the society for constitution infor-

mation, and of the London Corresponding Society, from the year 1791, with a general view of their proceedings from that period to the present time. Acting as the organ of the committee, Mr. Pitt entered into an explanation of their sentiments, and of their proceedings. He said that they had formed their opinion of the papers submitted to their examination with the greatest expedition, and their report stated, so fully and particularly, those circumstances which, in the judgment of the committee, required the immediate attention of Parliament, that he felt it scarcely necessary for him to do more than shortly to recapitulate the different objects to which that report applied, and the various particulars which came under consideration.

The report, so expeditiously laid before the House, contained a general view of the transactions referred to the committee, without waiting for a more minute investigation of the subject. It appeared to them, that a plan had been digested and acted upon, and, at that moment, was in forwardness towards its execution, the object of which was nothing less than to assemble a pretended convention of the people, for the purposes of arrogating the character of a general representation of the nation; of superseding, in the first place, the representative

capacity of the House of Commons; and of assuming, in the next place, the legislative power of the country at large. If the circumstances, contained in the report, should impress the minds of the House with the same conviction with which they had impressed the minds of the committee, there would be no doubt that they would lead to the same practical conclusion; namely, that, if such designs existed, if such designs had been acted upon, and were in a state of forwardness, there was not one moment to be lost in arming the executive power with those additional means which might be adequate to impose an effectual check upon the further progress of such a plan, and to prevent it from being carried into final execution.

Mr. Pitt impressed on the House the necessity of bearing in their recollection, in their consideration of the report, that a great part of it was merely introductory; and that, though it referred to transactions of a date long antecedent to the period in which the acts of the societies implicated had assumed the serious aspect of practical treason; and though they were notorious, it was, nevertheless, necessary to bring them forward again to observation, in order to supply a clue for unravelling the complicated circumstances of the plan,—and, by

comparing and combining them with the subsequent proceedings of the individuals concerned, to shew that, from the beginning, their views were the same, and that the pretext of reform, under which they masked their purpose, was far from being the real object of their pursuits. The committee had been so limited, in point of time, that they had been unable methodically to digest, or practically to point out, the various minute parts of the great and momentous business before the House. The committee, however, anxious to afford all practicable information, and to throw all possible light upon the subject, and to indicate the daily increasing approximation of danger, had kept in view the great object, the leading design, of the plan.

The papers found, as far as related to that part of the conspiracy, which immediately implicated the Corresponding Society, and the society for constitutional information, contained a correspondence, for two years, with various other societies in this country and in France; and from these, coupled with their subsequent and more recent proceedings, it was evident that these societies, which would be found now intent on assembling a convention, had had such a measure in contemplation from the very beginning; that it was conceived so long

ago as two years before; was openly avowed in their correspondence, but was kept in reserve to be reduced to practice whenever a fit opportunity should occur. This whole system of insurrection would appear, from the papers referred to, to be founded on the modern doctrine of the Rights of Man;—that monstrous doctrine by which the weak and ignorant, who were most susceptible of impression from such barren and abstract propositions, were attempted to be seduced to overturn government, law, property, security, religion, order, and every thing valuable in this country, as men, acting upon the same ideas, had already overturned and destroyed every thing in France, and disturbed the peace, and endangered the safety, if not the existence, of every nation in Europe. Whatever arguments, against the cautionary measures adopted to prevent the evil effects of that pernicious doctrine, might be grounded on the contemptible situation of the authors, and on the absurdity of the principles of those books in which it was inculcated, yet, allowing the one to be as contemptible as the others were absurd, it was no light or trivial circumstance, when notions were deduced from it, of the most alarming nature, which were sedulously promulgated, and eagerly adopted, by large bodies of people; and when the proceedings of

all these Jacobin societies would appear (as the papers before the House fully demonstrated) to be only comments on that text;—a text for the inculcation of which those societies were the disciples here, as their corresponding French brethren were the instruments for disseminating it in France, and for extending it, by carnage and slaughter, to all other parts of Europe.

Prior to the enormities committed in France, it would appear that a correspondence had been carried on between these societies and the Jacobin club in Paris, and that delegates were sent from them to the National Convention, and received formally by that Assembly; and that, at the very moment when the Jacobin faction, which usurped the government of that country, had commenced hostilities against Great Britain; those societies had still, as far as they could, pursued the same conduct, expressed the same attachment to their cause, adopted their appellations, their forms of proceedings, and their language; and, in short, had formed a settled design to disseminate the same principles, and to scatter the same seeds of ruin in their own country. It would be found, not only that the most effectual plans which cunning could devise had been laid for carrying this design into execution; but in the report would be seen a statement of the catalogue

of the manufacturing towns marked out, as the most likely (from the vast concourse of ignorant and profligate men, who necessarily collect in such places) to adopt their plans; and corresponding societies established there, to keep up and to extend the chain of seditious intercourse. In that catalogue would be found, a well-chosen selection of the places of residence of those people who must be naturally supposed to be most ready to rise at the call of insurrection; who were most likely to be blinded by their artifices; and prejudiced by their professions; whose understandings were most subject to be misled by their doctrines, and rendered subservient to their views; and whom fraudful persuasion, proneness to discontent, and the visionary and fallacious hope of improving their condition by any alteration of it whatever, would be most likely to congregate into an enormous torrent of insurrection, which would sweep away all the barriers of government, law, and religion, and leave our country a naked waste for usurped authority to range in, uncontrolled and unresisted.

Mr. Pitt next directed the attention of the House to the extraordinary manner in which these societies had varied their plans of operations,—sometimes acting in undisguised audacious hostility;—sometimes wearing the

mask of attachment to the state and country;—one day openly avowing their intentions, as if purposely to provoke the hand of justice;—the next putting on the mask of reform, and asserting the utmost zeal for the preservation of the constitution. Their letter to the society at Norwich* contained a plain avowal of their object, an *apology for deigning to apply to Parliament*; and a candid, and sincere, confession, that not to the Parliament, not to the Executive Power, were they to look for redress, but to themselves, and to the convention which they proposed to erect. They afterwards recom-

* *Extract of a Letter from the Secretary to the Society for Constitutional Information to the Secretary to the United Political Societies at Norwich, dated 16th of April, 1793.*

"Where then are we to look for the remedy? To that Parliament of which we complain? To the Executive Power, which is implicitly obeyed, if not anticipated, in that Parliament? Or to ourselves, represented in some meeting of delegates for the extensive purpose of reform, which we suppose you understand by the term CONVENTION?

"It is the end of each of these propositions that we ought to look to; and as success in a good cause must be the effect of perseverance, and the rising reason of the time, let us determine with coolness, but let us persevere with decision. As to a Convention, we regard it as a plan the most desirable, and the most practicable, so soon as the great body of the people shall be courageous and virtuous enough to join us in the attempt. Hitherto we have no reason to believe that the moment is arrived for that purpose. As to any petition to the Crown, we believe

mended a perseverance in the petitions for reform, to be used as a cover to their designs, which they were to throw off at a proper time, when a period propitious to their views should arrive. Happily for this country, and for the whole world, they had, prematurely, supposed that period to be near at hand, and had, in consequence, thrown off the mask, at a time when the bulk of the nation were unanimously uniting with government in vigilance and care for its protection, and in the determination to oppose their efforts.

it hopeless in its consequences.—With respect to the last of your proposals, we are at a loss to advise.—If the event is looked to in the vote which may be obtained from that body, to whom this petition is to be addressed, which of us can look to it without the prospect of an absolute negative? In this point of view, therefore, it cannot require a moment's consideration. But if we regard the *policy* of such a petition, it may, in our apprehension, be well worth considering as a warning voice to our present legislators, and as a signal for imitation to the majority of the people. Should such a plan be vigorously and generally pursued, it would hold out a certainty to our fellow-countrymen that we are not a handful of individuals unworthy of attention or consideration, who desire the restoration of the ancient liberties of England; but, on the contrary, it might bring into light that host of well-meaning men, who, in the different towns and counties of this realm, are silently, but seriously, anxious for reformation in the government.

"We exhort you, with anxiety, to pursue your laudable endeavours for the common good, and never to despair of the public cause!"

In their communication with the British Convention at Edinburgh, they styled that assembly the representatives of the people, clothed in all the right to reform; they sent delegates to it; and when some of the most active and mischievous of its members fell under the sentence of the law, they boldly asserted their innocence and their merits, in direct opposition to that law; paid every tribute of enthusiastic applause to the persons convicted by the verdict of juries legally constituted, and of respect to the Convention, pronouncing them objects of panegyric and envy. In conformity with their prior declarations, they made the legal condemnation of these guilty persons the signal, as they called it, of coming to *issue* on the point, "Whether the law should frighten them into compliance, or they oppose it with its own weapons—force and power?" That was to say, distinctly, whether they should yield obedience to the laws of their country, or oppose them by insurrection? This was as strong a case as the mind of man could well conceive, yet it was only introductory to facts of a still stronger nature.

He now referred to the history of a society which, despicable and contemptible, though the persons who composed it were, as to talents, education, and influence, yet, when looked at

with cautious attention, and compared with the objects which they had in view, and the motives on which they acted, namely, that great moving principle of all jacobinism,—the love of plunder, devastation, and robbery, which now bore the usurped name of liberty,—and that system of butchery and carnage which had been made the instrument of enforcing those principles, they would appear to be formidable, in exact proportion to the meanness and contemptibility of their characters. Of that society it was the characteristic, that, being composed of the lower orders of the people, it had within it the means of unbounded extension, and concealed in itself the seeds of rapid increase. It had already risen into no less than thirty divisions in London, some of them containing as many as six hundred persons, and was connected, by a systematical chain of correspondence, with other societies scattered through all the manufacturing towns where the seeds of those principles were laid, which artful and dangerous people might best convert to their own purposes. It would be proved, that this society had displayed an enormous degree of boldness, and had assumed to itself, in express terms, a power to watch over the progress of Parliament, to scan its proceedings, and prescribe limits for its actions, beyond which, if it presumed to advance, that

august society was to issue its mandate, not only to controvert its proceedings, but to put an end to its existence; so that if the Parliament should think it necessary to oppose, by any act of penal coercion, the ruin of the constitution, that would be the war-whoop for insurrection; the means of defence would become the signal of attack, and the Parliament rendered the instrument of its own annihilation. Language like this, coming from people apparently so contemptible in talents, so mean in their description, and so circumscribed in their power, would, abstractedly considered, be supposed to deserve compassion, as the wildest workings of insanity; but the researches of the committee would tend to prove, that it had been the result of deep design, matured, moulded into shape, and ripe for mischievous effect, when opportunity should offer.

Alluding to the publication of a circular address, already noticed, Mr. Pitt considered it as a new æra in the history of insurrection, in which the House might contemplate those great machines of jacobinism the societies referred to in the report. A deliberate and deep-concerted plan was then announced for actually assembling a Convention for all England,—not to be the representatives of these particular bodies for the accomplishment of any specific legal object,

but to be the representatives of the whole body of the people of England, and evidently intended to exercise legislative and judicial capacities,—to overturn the established system of government,—and to wrest from the Parliament that power which the people and the constitution had lodged in their hands. The plan was to be carried into execution in a few weeks; it had been emphatically stated, that *no time was to be lost*; and lest, by any possibility, their ruinous intentions should be misunderstood, the circular letter was addressed equally to all parts of the island, and circulated with a degree of vigour, cunning, and address, truly astonishing. A central spot was declared to be fixed upon, although it was deemed unsafe to mention it, until assurances of fidelity should have been received from the persons to whom it was to be communicated;—and each separate society had been expressly enjoined to send an exact account of the number of its members, friends, and adherents, in order to form a correct estimate of their force.

If it were objected, that men of this description could not be expected to act with so much consistency and art, when it was found that their plans had been carried on with a degree of cunning and management which greater men, in worthier causes, had failed to

manifest, such an objection could have no weight, opposed as it was by incontrovertible evidence. Every one who knew the nature of Jacobins, and of Jacobin principles, could not but see, in the pretences of Parliamentary Reform, held out by these societies, the arrogant claims of the same class of men, as those who lorded it in France, to trample upon the rich, and to crush every description of men, women, and children; the dark designs of a few, making use of the name of the people to govern all; a plan founded in the arrogance of wretches, the outcasts of society, tending to enrich themselves by depriving of property, and of life, all those who were distinguished either for wealth or for probity;—a plan which had been long felt by the unfortunate people of France in all its aggravated horrors, and which, he feared, would long, very long, continue to be felt by that ill-fated country.

The societies had continued to act upon this horrible plan,—and their proceedings at their meeting, on the 14th of April, exhibited no faint illustration of what they might be expected to do in the full majesty of power. In their resolutions they arraigned every branch of the government, threatened the Sovereign, insulted the House of Peers, and accused the Commons of insufficiency.—They noticed the

measures of Parliament which were to serve as the signals of insurrection,—and declared that, if such measures should be adopted, they should be rescinded by the authority of the people; and they maintained that the constitution had been destroyed. Could there be a more explicit avowal of their views? The proofs of these allegations were to be found in their own authentic records, and in the express and deliberate avowal of their own deliberate acts, in their meditated system of insurrection. Such was the essence of the subject; and should the House be of opinion that this so deeply affected the safety and existence of Parliament itself, and so struck at the root of government and the constitution, as to demand interference, there were other matters, in addition, which would contribute not a little to increase their impatience to baffle the views of the conspirators, and to stop the final execution of their projects. At the close of the report it was alleged, on grounds not light or trivial, though requiring further investigation, that *arms had been actually procured and distributed by these societies*, and were in the hands of those very people whom they had laboured to corrupt;—and that, even at that time, instead of dissolving this formidable, league, and disbanding this jacobin, army, they had shewn themselves resolutely bent on the

pursuit of their purpose, and displayed preparations of defiance and resistance to the measures of government.

In conclusion, Mr. Pitt observed, it was for the House to consider, with reference not to the quality of the persons, but to the nature and magnitude of the objects, what measures ought to be adopted? When the causes and proceedings were duly investigated, it would appear that so formidable a conspiracy had never before existed. The inquiry was yet far from complete, and, consequently, unfit for final decision. The documents were so voluminous, that the committee had not been able to examine the whole of them with requisite attention, but they had deemed it necessary to shew the House what they had already done, which, in their apprehension, would supply sufficient grounds for the measure which he meant to propose,—a temporary suspension of the *Habeas-Corpus* law. As this great and essential benefit to the subject had been devised and provided for the preservation of the Constitution, on the one hand, so, on the other, it could not exist if the Constitution were destroyed. The temporary sacrifice of that law might, on certain occasions, be as necessary to the support of the Constitution, as the maintenance of its principles was on all other

occasions. It had been suspended, at a time when the Constitution and liberty of the country were most peculiarly guarded and respected; and such a suspension was more particularly called for at this crisis, when attempts were made to disseminate, through the realm, principles and means of action which might produce much more lamentable effects, and, at last, require a remedy greater in extent, and more severe in operation, than the one now proposed. Such was the unanimous opinion of the committee. Mr. Pitt then moved, "for leave to bring in a bill to empower his Majesty to secure and detain all such persons as should be suspected of conspiring against his person and government."

This motion experienced the most active and determined resistance from Mr. Fox and his political adherents. The report was said to contain no one fact which had not long been the object of animadversion in the daily prints. Mr. Fox loudly condemned the inference drawn by the committee, that the object of these societies was to overthrow the government,—although never was an object more distinctly stated, or more explicitly avowed. He did not scruple to maintain, that, under the express terms of legal and constitutional methods, they had shewn themselves the friends of peace, and,

in no one instance had they belied their professions.—Here Mr. Fox defended the societies upon the same grounds on which he defended his own party; and, indeed, identified their views and their objects, by representing these societies as pursuing legal methods to accomplish constitutional purposes; and, as friends to peace, whose conduct corresponded with their professions! He saw nothing formidable in a Convention; he had himself formally belonged to a Convention of delegates in Yorkshire, and elsewhere, who had petitioned Parliament; and, though the House had refused to acknowledge them in the character of delegates, they received their petition as the petition of individuals. The Roman Catholics in Ireland, too, had held a Convention, whose delegates were favourably received by his Majesty. He contended, then, that the proposed Convention of the Jacobins was strictly legal, and that it would be dangerous for the House to declare it otherwise. Even if their object were that which the committee had imputed to them, the measure now proposed was infinitely more mischievous, in the opinion of Mr. Fox, than the evil which it professed to remedy. It went to overturn the corner-stone of the constitution, and he should consider it his duty to oppose it in every stage.

The same line of argument was pursued by Mr. Grey, and other members of the same party.—Mr. Sheridan, in particular, substituting wit for argument, invective for reason, and assertion for fact, attempted to throw the veil of ridicule over the proceedings of the committee, which he termed the Committee of Public Safety, while he styled Mr. Pitt the *British Barrere.* He expressed his disbelief of the existence of treasonable practices in the country; affirmed that Mr. Pitt was of the same opinion, and that his only aim was to create some new panic for the purpose of securing the continuance of his power over the people.

On the example cited by Mr. Fox, of the Irish Catholic petition, Mr. Burke observed, that Mr. Fox was not such a fool as not to be sensible of its irrelevancy;—for he was, undoubtedly, nothing less than a fool, except when he chose, like the elder Brutus, to assume the disguise of idiotcy, the better to assert the liberties of his country. The Irish Catholics did *not* hold a Convention, but presented a respectful petition to the House through a meeting of delegates. Their object was special and avowed, whereas the Convention to which the Bill was referred intended to erect itself into a paramount power over the constituted autho-

rities of the realm. The House seemed little disposed to concur in the sentiments of the opposition, who, upon a division, could only muster thirty-nine members, while two hundred and one voted for bringing in the Bill.—The Bill was then brought in, read a first and second time, and committed; and, the various clauses having been settled in the committee, the report was received by the House, and the Bill was ordered to be engrossed, and read a third time the next day.—This was not done, however, without a continuance of that resistance which had been opposed to its introduction. Although the sentiments of the House were most decisively in favour of the measure, the opposition, with a degree of captiousness and petulance, most unworthy of men exercising legislative functions, availed themselves of parliamentary forms to divide the House no less than twelve times, after the main question had been carried, and to protract the sitting till half past three in the morning.

This opposition was continued, with still greater violence, on the following day, when the Bill was read a third time. Mr. Grey then took the lead in it.—He accused the committee of being either deceived themselves, or of seeking to deceive others, and to make the House parties to the imposture. He vindicated the

conduct of the societies by the example of the meetings, in 1782, held under the auspices of Mr. Pitt, and insisted that the object of both was the same,—to obtain parliamentary reform; though nothing but the most absolute imbecility, or the most wilful blindness, could lead any one to suppose that the Jacobin Societies meant to limit their efforts to such an attempt: indeed, the assertion belied the declared sentiments of the societies themselves, as delivered in their circular addresses. Mr. Grey launched out into a strain of violent invective against the political conduct of Mr. Pitt, whom he accused of duplicity and apostacy throughout; while he declared his belief that the present measure was urged with so much dispatch, only because the Minister knew, that if he did not carry it by stealth, the public would not suffer it to pass at all. Mr. Pitt has been already defended against the charge of apostacy, as grounded on his sentiments and conduct on the subject of parliamentary reform. It has been distinctly shewn, from his own explanations, that the object of *his* reform was totally different from the plan of Mr. Grey, and as opposite to the projects of the Seditious Societies, as *improvement* is to *destruction*. Never, too, was the charge of duplicity more grossly misapplied than it was to Mr. Pitt, whose

whole conduct, both public and private, was open, ingenuous, and sincere.—He never shrunk from the avowal of his sentiments,—he was never afraid to support his principles; and that spirit of craft and dissimulation, out of which the line of conduct so falsely imputed to him could alone arise, was as foreign from his mind as the violence of party is from the zeal of patriotism, or the language of invective from the accents of truth. The indirect threat, at the close of Mr Grey's observation, savoured not a little of the spirit of those Seditious Clubs, whose conduct he so boldly vindicated; as it implied the existence of a popular power sufficient to controul and overawe the regular proceedings of Parliament.

In the course of the debate it was contended by the opposition, as a reason for refusing to trust any additional power to them, that they had treated Messrs. Muir and Palmer, the Scotch convicts, with unexampled rigour, and had disregarded their humblest petitions for mercy. This falsehood, however, was immediately repelled by Mr. Dundas, who positively denied that any petition for mercy had been presented by either of the parties, and declared that every indulgence which could consistently be granted had been extended to them.

It having been observed that when the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended in 1715 and 1745, a rebellion raged in the country, Mr. Dundas replied, that it had been suspended no less than nine times since the revolution, that no politician or historian had ever asserted, that the consequences of its suspension were injurious to the constitution; and, most justly declared, that the landing of a foreign force, or an open rebellion, was much less dangerous, and less difficult to counteract, than the secret poison of domestic conspirators.

It was, nevertheless, most pertinaciously contended by Mr. Sheridan, that none of the precedents justified the present measure, which was likely to produce a real conspiracy, as the societies had only, in future, to pursue their object, whatever it might be, in a more cautious manner, to elude the vigilance of government. This declaration involved a recommendatory hint, of which, no doubt, it was hoped, by their advocates, the societies would avail themselves. Their sentiments, Mr. Sheridan asserted, sprang from the doctrines of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke, and the Duke of Richmond, whom he represented as ungenerous, for treating their proselytes with rigour. From whatever source their sentiments sprang, there can be no doubt that they were encouraged to persevere in them

by the doctrines now held by Mr. Fox, Mr. Grey, and Mr. Sheridan. He lastly threatened the House, with the absence of himself, and his friends, in the event of the Bill passing into a law.

Considerable surprise was testified by Mr. Windham, at the credulity of those who could suppose that parliamentary reform was any thing else than a mask to conceal the most atrocious jacobinical designs. The reform intended, he compared to the sweeping amendments, not unusual in the House of Commons, which proposed to leave out every thing but the word "That." In ridicule of the fantastic notion of the similarity of Mr. Pitt's conduct to that of the French regicidal rulers, which had been advanced by the Opposition, he observed, that the similitude was the same as that of Captain Fluellin's hero, in Shakespeare, to Alexander the Great; because "there is a river in Macedon, and there is a river in Wales, and there is salmon in both." If, said he, gentlemen call us a "Committee of Public Safety," may we not call them a Committee of Jacobins? If we are accused of promoting despotism, may we not consider them as the partisans of anarchy? Severe as the retort was, it had full as much of truth as of sarcasm in it. Mr. Windham further observed, that the vigour of government

must keep pace with the necessity of the times, and that, if the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act should be found inadequate to the purpose, more efficacious means must be tried. This remark, the substance of which was, that government must do its duty, for, if it did not adopt efficacious measures for the security of the state, and the preservation of public order, it would fail in a most essential part of its duty, extorted a violent exclamation of displeasure from Mr. Fox.—Good God! said he, what more is to be done after this? Will they proceed still further in their horrid mimicry of the jacobin rulers of France? They might disclaim the comparison, if they pleased, but the resemblance was real. They, like them, fabricated stories of plots and conspiracies, and made terror the order of the day, to establish a tyrannical sway over the whole nation. He again expressed his belief that the societies meant nothing more than a reform of Parliament; and for the people to watch over the conduct of Parliament no more proved a design to supersede its functions, than the vigilance of Parliament over the executive power indicated a disrespect for the person and authority of the Sovereign. He admitted, that recent events had produced a change in his mind, and had corrected several of his opinions. He had once

despised the sentiment, "*Iniquissimam pacem justissimo bello, antifero;*" but he was now prepared to say, that there was hardly any condition to which a people could be reduced which he would not rather endure, than advise them to have recourse to arms. But, if the present system of oppression should be persisted in, the next step might be a privation of the trial by jury; and he did not know but he should prefer any change to such a tyranny as that. He insisted, that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act would be not more iniquitous than impolitic. At home, it would exasperate the minds of the people, engender discontent, and stimulate them to resistance; while it would excite the greatest joy in France. How triumphantly would Barrere adduce it as a proof of the truth of all the stories which he had propagated respecting England? How would their project of invasion be promoted by the news that an insurrection was ready to break out in their favour,—that the French party was become so formidable as to threaten the existence of government, and had driven it to the desperate resource of suspending the constitution, in order to counteract their efforts?

This florid declamation induced Mr. Pitt to make some remarks upon what he called the funeral oration which Mr. Fox had pronounced

on the departed liberties of British subjects, which he had stated to have expired with the introduction of the bill—a bill nothing worse, nor more dangerous in its consequences, than what had been known, from the experience and practice of our ancestors, to be a wise and proper measure, when required by the circumstances of the country. He then called the attention of the House to the real state of the question before them.—Whether the danger with which the constitution of the country was threatened, by the practices now exposed, was, or was not, greater than any danger which could result from putting into the hands of the executive government a more than ordinary degree of power, for the purpose of resisting what they considered a very dangerous conspiracy? In answer to the preposterous assertion of Mr. Fox, that, if the bill passed, all the rights of the people, and all the privileges of Parliament, would be at once destroyed, he observed, that the bill was limited in its duration, that it was but a temporary measure, adapted to a present existing evil, and was to continue in force for little more than six months. It invested the executive government with a discretionary power to imprison suspected persons for that limited time, without bringing them to trial,—all the rights of the people, and

all the privileges of Parliament, remaining uninterruptedly the same, attaching all the time the same responsibility upon ministers to which they were liable in every other situation in which they acted, and rendering them equally answerable for any abuse of this power as they were for the abuse of any other discretionary power which was vested in them.—This being the true state of the case, would any one pretend that it placed the Country, and the Parliament, in such a situation as to make it a question, whether a member should desert his duty in Parliament, and abandon the interests of his Constituents?

Upon what grounds the measures of government were compared to the conduct of the French rulers, it was impossible to conceive, as they who drew the comparison had never condescended to explain them. Here a case had been stated, and clearly proved, of the existence of a party in the country, whose avowed system aimed at the destruction of all civilized order, the annihilation of Parliament, and the subversion of the Constitution itself, by the introduction of Jacobinism, which had already proved so fatal to France, and which, at that moment, threatened the dissolution of every established government in Europe! Under these circumstances it was proposed to pre-

vent the calamitous effects of this dangerous conspiracy, by the adoption of a legal measure, limited in its duration, and which the experience and wisdom of our ancestors had approved, and found highly beneficial. — How, then, could such a measure be compared with the conduct of the ruling power in France, miscalled a government?—A power which, to support its reprobated, detestable, and presumptuous usurpation, had recourse to every stratagem which fraud, robbery, and injustice, could suggest. It was unfair to impose any such comparisons on the House; for, in the present instance, nothing more was proposed to be done than to resist French crimes, by opposing to them English principles; and it would not be said that there existed the least comparison, analogy, or imitation, between them.

Mr. Pitt then adverted to the extraordinary argument of Mr. Fox, that, because all the measures which had yet been taken had proved ineffectual to check the progress of the evil which they had been applied to remedy, we were, therefore, not to persevere in our endeavours to subdue it, by the application of means stronger and more efficacious. But it might, he said, be asked, whether, if those measures had not been adopted, and the vigilance of government exerted, the evils complained of

might not have been much greater now than they really were? and whether, if no such steps had been taken, within the two last years, we should have enjoyed the same tranquillity which had prevailed during that period? The fact was, that without those measures, the scenes of mischief which had now been opened to the view, would have been, much earlier, brought to maturity. It had, however, been contended, that as the remedy applied had proved inefficacious, one of a different kind should be tried, and concession should succeed to severity. To this it was answered, that the progress of a Jacobin Convention, if once established in the country, could not be stopped, nor its consequences averted, by indulgence and concession;—remedies most unfit to be applied to so daring an attempt upon the existence of the constitution. Indeed, the existence of the constitution was incompatible with such concession; besides, were Ministers so weak as to have recourse to it, the inutility of the attempt might be deduced from the declarations of the Societies themselves, who boldly rejected all compromise, and refused to be satisfied with any thing less than the total surrender of the British Constitution. It was, therefore, evident that resistance, and that of the strongest nature, was absolutely necessary, notwith-

standing all that had been augured in so prophetic a strain in opposition to the adoption of severe measures, even in extreme cases.

As an argument against such measures, it had been asserted, by Mr. Fox, that persecution would never eradicate the principles of disaffection, and thence it was inferred, that it would be wiser to tolerate the opinions of the seditious societies. But it was truly answered, by Mr. Pitt, that such conduct would amount to a toleration of the worst species of anarchy, sedition, and treason;—and it might also have been observed, that the very toleration which Mr. Fox recommended to his Sovereign had brought the King of France to the scaffold, and his kingdom to ruin. This observation forcibly obtrudes itself on the mind in reading the debates of this period, in which it clearly appears, that if Mr. Fox and his friends had been in power, and had acted in conformity with the principles which they professed in Parliament, they would have pursued the very same line of conduct which the weak Ministers of Louis XVI. had pursued; and, if they had not been productive of the same consequences, posterity would have had to thank the good sense of the nation, and not the wisdom of the Ministers, for their escape from the most dreadful of all human calamities.

To the trite question, where are you to stop?—In the pursuit of coercive measures, Mr. Pitt had too much political wisdom, and was too much of a practical statesman, to give any answer which could *limit* government in the application of remedies to growing evils, and to say, thus far will we go, and no farther.—He entered his protest against a conduct so unwise and impolitic, and contented himself with declaring, that prosecution ought, in no instance, to extend beyond what the necessity of the case required; reserving the propriety of every future remedy to be discussed on its own separate merits. He deprecated, as irrelevant and unnecessary, the pompous declarations of the right of the people to assemble, for legal purposes, in a constitutional way, or to petition Parliament for the correction of abuses, or for the redress of grievances, such right having never been questioned, and having no connection whatever with the immediate subject of discussion. He successfully exposed the falsehood of those who had represented his principles of reform to have been the same with those of the disaffected clubs;—he had fully declared his sentiments on the subject of a Parliamentary Reform, the preceding year, and his opinions still remained unaltered; but surely no person would presume to say that there existed the

most remote analogy between legal societies for obtaining reform in Parliament, with an intention and a desire, legally and constitutionally, to improve the representation, and that Convention proposed by the Jacobin Societies, whose object, as proved by their own papers, was the destruction of Parliament, and not its improvement? The bulk of them did not even pretend that Reform was either their view or their wish; it was neither in their mouths nor in their minds;—nor did their actions correspond with the actions of men who wished well to their country. To assume, as a pretext for affording them any sanction, that their object was a legal and constitutional reform, was too ridiculous an idea to admit even of a moment's consideration;—as well might men talk of giving their sanction to legal conspiracy, and legal assassination, as imagine that those societies had any legal or virtuous purpose whatever in their system!—Mr. Pitt read various extracts from the papers and minutes of the London Corresponding Society, and of the Society for Constitutional Information, in confirmation and support of his arguments and assertions; which tended, clearly and fully, to demonstrate, that their intention was not to appeal to Parliament for redress of their supposed grievances, but to proceed to

acts of authority and control over the functions of Parliament.

The remedy now proposed, notwithstanding the odious colours in which it had been dressed, was nothing else than the imposition of a legal restraint upon criminal actions; and, in the opinion of Mr. Pitt, the present crime amounted to a conspiracy of such a nature as to supply an equal, if not a stronger, reason for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* act, than the cases of invasion and rebellion, to which frequent allusion had been made.—Though the efficacy of the measure had been denied by the Opposition, the members of the societies, who were most likely to be affected by it, had entertained a different opinion; for so much did they dread its operation, that they had expressly specified the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* act as one of the signals of insurrection; and, as calling for the immediate meeting of the Convention. A stronger justification than this could not be assigned for the expedition with which the Ministers deemed it necessary to pass the suspension-bill into a law. As to the inducement which the measure would hold out to the French to invade this country, it was considered, that the act was calculated to produce an opposite effect, for, certainly, the suppression of our

domestic foes would be no very welcome intelligence to our foreign enemies.

This debate, which was carried on with considerable heat, was protracted to the hour of three on Sunday morning, when a division took place, and the bill was passed by 146 votes against 28.—It underwent some discussion in the House of Lords, to which the report of the Secret Committee of the Commons had been referred, where the measure was ably defended by Lord Grenville, Lord Barrington, the Earls of Abingdon, Caernarvon, and Mansfield, and the Duke of Leeds; and was strenuously opposed by Lord Lauderdale, Lord Derby, and the Marquis of Lansdowne. Lord Thurlow ridiculed the apprehensions expressed of the evil consequences likely to flow from the bill, which he represented as proceeding from inattention to its provisions. It gave no other power than that of postponing the trial of suspected persons for a certain time. All, therefore, that had been said of its being a revolutionary measure; that it was a full indemnity to Ministers; that it gave them the power of Lettres-de-Cachet; was idle declamation. Nine Peers only voted against the bill; and one-hundred and eight for it.—It, consequently, passed into a law.

The second report of the Secret Committee was produced to the House of Lords in the middle of June, by Lord Grenville, who expatiated at large on its contents, which furnished as good evidence as the nature of the case would admit of, that the intention of the societies was to produce a revolution in England, on French principles. His Lordship closed his observations with a motion for an address to the King, expressing the concern of the House at this heinous conspiracy, their wish to vest additional powers in the Executive Government, for the suppression of such crimes, and their readiness to give energy and vigour to the law. Notwithstanding the solitary opposition of Lord Lauderdale, the address was carried without a division, and it was resolved to desire the concurrence of the Commons thereto.—It was accordingly sent, without delay, to the Lower House, where the subject was taken into immediate consideration, the report of the committee being already before them. This report fully developed that part of the conspiracy which related to the providing of arms. In Scotland, this scheme had been brought to the greatest maturity, orders, to a considerable extent, having been given for the fabrication of pikes, and great numbers of persons being assembled, during the nights, to learn the use of them.

That similar means of offence were preparing by the English Societies, appeared by the letters from the Society at Sheffield to Hardy, and to the Secretaries of the Norwich Society, containing an account of the proposed form and dimensions of the pikes. The pretext for obtaining a supply of these arms, was the danger to be apprehended from the introduction of foreign troops, and the violence of the opposite party. The report detailed so much of the proceedings, resolutions, addresses, and correspondence of the different societies, as tended to prove, that they acted with one common design to assemble a general Convention, for the purpose of assuming the legislative power. They had declared, that no allegiance was due to a government not conducted by the representatives of the people; that the present Parliament were not the representatives of the people;—that they would petition them no more; and that they would seek for more effectual means to obtain redress. They had approved and adopted Paine's books on the Rights of Man, and inserted, in their minutes, copies of the speeches delivered by Barrere, Roland, and Jean Bon St. Andrè, in the French Convention, in January, 1793, which attribute supreme power to a Convention, formed in the manner which they proposed.

In the appendix to the report were inserted authentic copies of all the documents which confirmed the facts, and justified the inferences maintained in the report itself. Mr. Pitt, on moving the concurrence of the House with the address of the Lords, entered into a brief analysis of the report, but expressed his readiness to enter into a more particular discussion, if any member should feel disposed to dispute any of its positions. After a few observations from Mr. Fox, and the Attorney-General, the motion passed without a division.

While this important business was pending in Parliament, and during the intervals of discussion, a measure was brought forward by Mr. Sheridan, similar to one very recently proposed; the proposal of which was productive of so much alarm, and of such serious consequences. He moved for leave to bring in a bill to enable Roman Catholics to serve as officers in the army and navy, by abolishing the existing test, and by substituting this form of oath in its stead.—"I, A. B. do swear, that I "will bear true allegiance to his Majesty, and "defend his right to the Crown, the laws and "constitution of these kingdoms, and the "succession to the throne, as by law esta-"blished." The same plea was urged in defence of this motion, as was urged when a

similar motion was brought forward in the House of Commons, in 1807;—that a bill had passed in Ireland, to admit Catholics to hold certain commissions in the army, but that it was nugatory in effect, until a similar act should be passed in England, because no Catholic officer could serve without subjecting himself to very severe penalties. At the same time it was acknowledged, that the bill for enabling the government to avail itself of the services of the French emigrants, had given birth to the present motion.—It was, however, objected by Mr. Dundas, that the bill went to repeal all religious tests whatever, a measure to which he believed the House would be little inclined to accede. At all events, it was a question of too much magnitude not to constitute the subject of a separate and serious discussion. He, therefore, moved the previous question, which was carried, after Mr. Fox had remarked, that the objection started by Mr. Dundas was the very ground on which the bill would have his warmest approbation.

Amidst the contentions of party, a subject more congenial to the feelings of all who truly love their country was introduced, in the House of Commons, by Lord Hawkesbury, who proposed a bill for enforcing the existing navigation laws, which had, of late, been shame-

fully evaded, in the principal object of regulation,—the proportion of British seamen required in the crews of our trading vessels;—that is *three-fourths.* In supporting his motion, his lordship took an able and most satisfactory view of our commercial history, from the earliest periods, and exhibited authentic accounts of the state of British shipping, in respect of tonnage, from the Restoration to the year 1792, by which it appeared, that from 1663 to 1669, it amounted only to 95,266 tons, and in the year 1792 to 1,329,979 tons.* No accurate account

* The following table shews the state of the tonnage at the different epochs.

		Tons.
The Restoration.....	1663— 9	95,266.
The Revolution.....	1688	190,533.
The Peace of Ryswick...	1697	144,264.
The last years of Wm.III..	1700— 1—2....	273,693.
The wars of Q. Anne....	1709—12	285,156.
The first years of Geo. I..	1713—15	421,431.
The first of George II....	1726—28	432,832.
The peaceful years.....	1736— 8	476,941.
The war of.....	1739—41	384,191.
The peaceful years.....	1749—51	609,798.
The war of.....	1755—57	451,254.
The first of George III.	1760	471,241.
War.....	1761	508,220.
The peaceful years.....	1764—66	639,872.
Ditto.....	1772— 4	795,943.
The American war.....	1775— 7	760,798.

could be obtained of the progressive increase of British seamen; but it appeared, that in 1792, from the register under the *New Navigation Act*, that there were belonging to the British dominions, 16,079 ships of 1,540,145 tons, navigated by 118,216 British seamen, of which England alone employed 10,633 ships of 1,186,610 tons, and 87,369 men. It was mentioned, by his lordship, as a curious specimen of the growth of our navy, that the privateers, fitted out in the single port of Liverpool, during the American war, were nearly equal in tonnage to the whole fleet equipped by Elizabeth, in 1588, to oppose the Spanish armada, which consisted only of 31,985 tons, and 15,272 men, while the other measured 30,787 tons, and were manned by 8,754 seamen. No opposition was made to this salutary bill, which very soon passed into a law. About the same time, a very satisfactory account of the prosperous state of the British territories, in India, was given to the House by Mr. Dundas, in the exhibition of his annual budget, by which it appeared,

The French war.....	1778	.....	657,283.
The Spanish war.....	1779	.....	590,911.
The Dutch war.....	1781	.....	547,953.
The peaceful years.....	1784— 6	.. ...	926,760.
Ditto.....	1790— 2	.....	1,329,979.

that, in the course of the preceding year, the Company's affairs had experienced a net improvement of nearly sixteen hundred and seventy thousand pounds, after the payment of half a million to the British government.

The attention of Parliament, however, was soon recalled from the contemplation of these naval, commercial, and political advantages, to a new discussion of questions, already decided in the most solemn and deliberate manner.—On the 30th of May, Mr. Fox, having embodied all the objections of his little party in certain resolutions, submitted them to the House of Commons, for the double purpose of affording himself and his associates another opportunity for the declaration of their sentiments on public affairs, and of recording these proofs of their political wisdom on the minutes of the House, for the benefit of posterity. The war, its object, its progress, the means of carrying it on, the subsidiary treaties, and the conduct of our allies, were all pressed into this compendium of party politics, which further contained the important discovery, that a secure peace was attainable by the British government, and ought to be attained; and that the proper means of attaining it was an explicit disavowal of interference in the internal affairs of France, or, at least, a distinct speci-

fication of the nature and extent of that interference. In supporting these extraordinary resolutions, which could answer no one good purpose, and the sole tendency of which, supposing them capable of making any impression, was to dispirit our allies, and to encourage our enemies, both foreign and domestic; all the old topics of declamation were renewed, accompanied, as usual, by many invidious personalities, and stale invectives. It was contended that it was highly impolitic to demolish jacobinism, without specifying the system of government to be adopted in its stead; and the restoration of monarchy, without declaring which of the monarchical constitutions of France was referred to, was asserted to be so vague and unsatisfactory, as to deter even the royalists of France from contributing to the success of the scheme. —Our situation was represented to be most gloomy, and even hopeless; — our force was stated to be daily diminishing, and our resources to be rapidly wasting away; while those of the French were increasing in strength, and extending in number, What the party, however, wanted in accuracy, they supplied in candour; for it was openly admitted, that they had no hope of inducing the House to pass the resolutions; but they expected one *good* to arise out of the discussion;—namely, that it would lead

the people seriously to reflect on the evils which surrounded them, induce them to assemble, *perhaps in the course of the summer*, in a legal manner, and, by declaring their sentiments with *a strong voice*, to awaken ministers to a sense of the true interests of the country. Here was an acknowledgement, that their arguments were not addressed to the representatives of the people in Parliament; but to the populace out of it! Thus, while the efforts of the government, seconded by all the loyal and well-disposed part of the community, were directed to the suppression of those seditious assemblages, which were now openly held in various parts of the kingdom for the dissemination of the most mischievous principles, and which were hostile alike to public peace and to social order, these factious leaders of a party did not blush to hold out a public invitation to the disaffected to continue their meetings; the qualification of holding them in a *legal* manner being a mere veil to cover the grossness of the proceeding; for, in the present temper of the public mind, imbecility alone could believe that the persons who would assemble on such an occasion, and on such an invitation, would subject their meetings, or their discussions, to the salutary restraints of those laws which they openly reviled, or to the decorous regulations of a

legislative body, even the legality of which they peremptorily denied.

Mr. Sheridan was most unsparing in his abuse of administration, whom he charged with being the authors of a system of alarm, calculated to deceive and to ensnare the people, while he maintained, that the traitorous designs, which had been indicated in the reports of the secret committee, were *fabulous plots*, and *forged conspiracies*, originating solely in the foul imaginations of his Majesty's ministers. This baseless assertion was immediately repelled by Mr. Pitt, as destitute alike of probability and of decency. He justly regarded Mr. Sheridan's abuse as being too often repeated to possess the merit of novelty, and as too unfounded to have any importance attached to it. But there was some degree of novelty, indeed, in such a mode of attack on the report of twenty-one members, to whose character, for honour and integrity, he would not do any injury by comparing it with the quarter whence it proceeded. A call to order by a member of the party, and supported by the Speaker, who had suffered Mr. Sheridan's scurrility to pass without notice, induced Mr. Pitt to apologize to the Chair, and to the House, to which *alone* he declared an apology to be due; while he properly reminded the Speaker, that the language which he had been

called upon to answer was not within the rules either of parliamentary debate, or of parliamentary decency.

Mr. Pitt then justified the committee against the senseless attack which had been made upon its integrity, stated the solid grounds on which its report had been founded, and exculpated the government from the various charges which had been preferred against it. In this defence there was, of necessity, much of repetition, it being equally impossible and superfluous always to urge new reasons against old accusations. Mr. Fox having inferred, from the existence of different forms of government, at the same time, in every period of history, without producing wars, that the Jacobin government of France could not be incompatible with the security of other states, Mr. Pitt admitted the premises but denied the conclusion. He allowed the opposite forms of government might co-exist without interfering with each other, when they acted upon certain rules, and from certain principles; but the case was different with respect to such a system as that which now prevailed in France;—a system such as had never existed before in any country, and to which no analogy could be found in the history of mankind;—a system which he described as admitting of no modification of its

vices, excluding all principles, and bearing in itself the seeds of hostility to every regular government;—a system not possessing the means of power for the protection of its subjects, but usurping them for their oppression. —Such a system presented no remedy for its vices, or hope of security to its neighbours, but in its entire subversion. Mr. Pitt resisted the proposal for entering into a negotiation with France, at this juncture, on the ground, that the mere attempt would produce an instantaneous dissolution of the confederacy, while there was not the smallest prospect of concluding a peace, upon terms that would be either honourable or safe. He successfully ridiculed the preposterous notion of prescribing the form of government to be established in France on the destruction of the existing form, as being founded on the very principle of interference, which the persons who advanced it had so strongly reprobated; and as carrying that principle to a much greater extent than ministers and their supporters had ever pretended to carry it to. The House divided on the previous question, which was carried by two hundred and eight votes against fifty-seven. The division in the House of Lords, where the Duke of Bedford had condescended to produce Mr.

Fox's resolutions, was, on the motion for adjournment, one hundred against thirteen.

It was this obstinate perseverance in principles, and in conduct, so repugnant to the general sense of the country, and so hostile to its welfare, that, probably, fixed the determination of the leaders of the Whig Party, who had long supported the ministers, to take upon them a proper share of the responsibility which attached to their measures. In pursuance of this honourable resolution, the Duke of Portland accepted the situation of Secretary of State for the Home Department;—Earl Fitzwilliam was appointed President of the Council;—Earl Spencer, Lord Privy Seal;—and Mr. Windham, Secretary at War, with a seat in the Cabinet, which did not attach to the office, but which was assigned, as an honourable mark of confidence and distinction.—Other members of the same party were likewise admitted into the administration. The motives which influenced the conduct of these distinguished persons, on the present occasion, were indeed most eminently laudable. They acted from a high sense of public duty; from a deep-rooted principle of genuine patriotism, which abhors interest as a rule of action, and renders all private attachments, and personal friendship, subservient to the general good,—to the welfare,

the prosperity, and the happiness of the state. —It was the sacrifice of patriotism on the altar of the country..

Such an accession of strength to the minister could not be received without evident marks of disappointment and disgust, by the small remnant of that body which had deserted its leaders, and which might, more properly, be termed *a faction* than *a party*. As Parliament was not yet prorogued, they determined to make that the channel for the conveyance of their sentiments, and their feelings, on the subject, to the public. With his usual ingenuity, Mr. Sheridan contrived to introduce them into the discussion of a motion which he submitted to the House on the 10th of July, respecting the Prussian subsidy. He then expatiated on the imputed inconsistency of those who had joined the ministry, particularly of the new Secretary at War, who, he imagined, was now reposing himself in the cool shade of the Chiltern Hundreds. He professed to lament what he called the dereliction of principle (but what was, in fact, a firm adherence to principle) in that gentleman and the Duke of Portland, both of whom, he said, had pledged themselves never to act with the present administration. They had, indeed, accepted a share of responsibility; and he ventured to predict,

that it would be a perilous responsibility, that a solemn hour of account would, at length, arrive, which no accession of numbers could ward off, or protract; when the hearts of the nation would be turned to one man, whose glory no diminution of party could impair, but who appeared to stand on higher ground by being less surrounded.—To him, in the stormy hour, would the nation turn, and they would find him—

> "Like a great sea-mark, standing every flow,
> "And saving those that eye him."

The natural termination of this pompous panegyric, in which Mr. Sheridan proved himself a better orator than a prophet, was strictly appropriate;—laudari a *laudato* viro, is certainly an honourable distinction, but, if the converse of the proposition be equally true, Mr. Fox had not much reason to be gratified with the officious commendations of his political trumpeter.

In his desultory harangue, Mr. Sheridan had contrived once more to expatiate on the object of the war, the state of our alliances, and on the various questions, either connected with, or arising out of, those important subjects. On all these points, Mr. Pitt thought it necessary again to correct his mistatements,

and to expose his fallacies. He chastised Mr. Sheridan, with becoming severity, for stigmatizing, as *despots*, all those powers, including Great Britain, who entered into a confederacy against the Jacobin government of France;—a mode of speech, which, like many of the tropes and figures used by the opposition at this period, had been borrowed from the members and admirers of that government. Mr. Sheridan having asked, in the course of his general censures of ministers, what promise they had fulfilled?—Mr. Pitt called upon him to say, what promise they had broken? The only way in which it was possible for them to break their promise, was to follow his advice, and to relinquish the object of the war,—to abandon every engagement with their allies,—to forget every debt which they owed to society, — every trust reposed in them by their Sovereign, and by Parliament,—and every thing which they owed to honour, honesty, or their own reputation.

It had been made one part of the charge, against ministers, that they were unpopular in America. But Mr. Sheridan, while he preferred this strange accusation, had observed, that there was a Jacobin party in that country, acting on French principles, and promoting French interests. Mr. Pitt expressed his hopes,

then, that the King's Ministers were as unpopular with that party, as Mr. Sheridan himself was with those who opposed Jacobin principles in this country. He could not have believed, if he had not heard the fact from his own lips, that the persons who professed those principles in America, were part of Mr. Sheridan's correspondents; but he was not very nice in his choice of correspondents in the Western hemisphere. It was of little consequence, however, whether the British Ministers were popular or unpopular in America;—he, for one, always expected to be unpopular with Jacobins, at home and abroad. It was enough for him to know, that the popularity of administration in this country would depend on the success of their efforts to check the progress of Jacobin principles, and on their firmness in opposing them, wherever they occurred, and in whatever shape they might be found. To promote impressions unfavourable to the success of the war, and to retrieve, if possible, a small degree of that popularity which had been lost by Mr. Sheridan's Jacobin friends in America, was pretty clearly the great object of his present motion.

Having animadverted, with equal spirit, on Mr. Sheridan's strictures on all the measures of government, Mr. Pitt observed, in conclu-

sion, that none of those measures, nor yet the object of the war, had produced so much irritation in his mind, as one matter of domestic concern to which he had so pointedly alluded. He had asked, what there could be, but a great and pressing necessity, to produce the new arrangements in the present administration?—This question Mr. Pitt answered with another,—What greater necessity could there exist to faithful subjects of their Sovereign, to honest guardians of the constitution, and to sincere lovers of their country, to unite their efforts to preserve the security of the Crown,—the authority of the Parliament,—the liberty, the tranquillity, and the safety of the nation, than the necessity of the present moment?—What description of persons were more likely to serve the King well, or to defend the Constitution wisely and faithfully, than those who had united on the ground of that necessity?—What was their object? They were not contending whether one family or another should compose the administration; they were not contending, on constitutional points, whether this or that legislative measure,—whether this or that mode of representation, should be adopted;—they were not then debating what was the best form of government for India, nor discussing the merits of a peace made twelve years

ago. Having stated what was *not* the object of the new administration, and what they had *not* done, Mr. Pitt proceeded to state what *was* their object, and what they *were* doing.—They were considering, during the existence of an alarming, disastrous, and unprovoked war, what was the best mode of defending the liberty, the property, and the security of every Englishman, by preserving the constitution from the dangers and destruction with which it was threatened.—And, as they tendered their allegiance, as they tendered their safety, as they cherished the memory of their ancestors, who had defended that constitution, as they regarded the interests of their posterity, they were bound to lay aside every distinction, to remove every obstacle, and to unite the talents, the characters, the integrity, and the honour, of all honest men who were able to serve their country;—upon which union depended, most essentially, the present and future safety, not only of Great Britain, but of Europe. On these principles had they united;—on these principles would they act; and if their exertions should unfortunately fail to secure the desired success they would, at least, have the consolation of being conscious that every effort had been made which human wisdom could suggest; and that nothing had been wanting, on their parts, towards the attainment of an object, to which

there was not one among them who would not devote all his faculties, and, if necessary, his life.—These, Mr. Pitt solemnly declared to be his feelings and sentiments on the subject.

After this explicit avowal of the grounds of the new union of political characters, an union founded on the best and purest principles which can actuate the mind of a patriot, the House negatived Mr. Sheridan's motion without a division; and, on the 10th of July, a period was put to the sessions by a speech from the throne.

It is not possible to pay a close attention to the speeches of Opposition, during this session, without perceiving their uniform and direct tendency to encourage the French government to persevere in their destructive system of foreign and domestic policy;—and, at the same time, to animate the mind, and to invigorate the efforts, of sedition, at home. With the solitary exception of the murder of the King, there was scarcely an act of the Executive Council of France which was not either openly defended, or indirectly palliated, in the British Senate.—French vigour, and French courage, afforded frequent topics of applause and admiration to English Representatives,—while the efforts of our own troops (unless, indeed, conducted by leaders immediately connected with the party) extorted no

mark of approbation, and while the disasters of our allies were dwelt on with evident pleasure; those allies, too, were vilified by the party, who lavished on them the most opprobrious terms which the language could supply; they were reprobated as plunderers by those who could descry nothing to condemn in the conduct of a government which subsisted only by plunder;—they were reviled as despots by those who could see nothing but integrity, wisdom, and happiness, in the most atrocious and sanguinary despotism which had ever disgraced the earth.—Their cause, which was the cause of Britain, was represented to be as hopeless and desperate, as it was base and unprincipled; while the cause of France was boldly proclaimed to be prosperous and triumphant, as it was virtuous and just. The resources of this country, too, were declared to be weak, fallacious, and temporary, while the resources of France were pronounced inexhaustible. Language better calculated to raise the spirits of our enemies, and to depress our own, the human imagination can scarcely conceive; yet such was the substance of the speeches of Mr. Fox and his friends, on the subject of the war, in reference to these various points.

In regard to our domestic enemies, their declarations were calculated to produce a similar

effect: not a measure was proposed, to check the torrent of disaffection, and to crush the growing evil, ere it arrived at destructive maturity, that did not experience the most determined resistance; not a plan was unfolded, however pregnant with mischief to the country, which was not deemed a fit subject for levity and ridicule; not an accusation was preferred, however serious and weighty, which was not treated with derision; not a conspiracy was developed, however supported by authentic documents, and unequivocal proofs, the very existence of which was not denied; and no agent of sedition was convicted who did not excite a lively interest, and a deep compassion,—and who did not experience protection and encouragement.*

But the most consummate assurance was requisite to term the plots which were unfolded by the secret committees of both Houses, and which were supported by such a body of evidence as was adduced in their reports, *forged plots* and *fabricated conspiracies!* No effort, however,

* Some members of the Opposition, at this period, paid a visit to the Scottish convicts, under sentence of transportation. These gentlemen, probably, recollected, that the Roman demagogue, Clodius, succeeded in persuading the people, that the *patriots*, who had suffered for conspiring with *Catiline* against the state, had been *unjustly treated!*

appeared too great, no meanness too little, which could forward the great object in view—the embarrassment of ministers, and the success of their enemies, of whatever description. The leader of that small band of political declaimers, which now formed the Opposition in Parliament, suffering under the pangs of disappointed ambition, all his hopes defeated, all his projects frustrated, sunk, degraded, and mortified, appears to have listened to the suggestions of despair, and, foregoing all expectation of succeeding to power but through the medium of the populace, to have resolved to recur to that desperate expedient; and, rather to gratify his wishes at the risk of a revolution, than remain quiet and passive, without consequence or distinction. At least, on no other supposition can his conduct, at this period, be accounted for. He possessed too much knowledge and abilities not to appreciate the dangers which threatened the country;* and not to perceive the full scope and intent of those exertions which the dis-

* In the various resolutions which Mr. Fox proposed to the House, with a view to express his disapprobation of the war, and to deprecate its continuance, he acted in strict unison with the recorded sentiments of the seditious clubs, who justly considered the war with France as a considerable impediment to the attainment of their objects. See Appendix C. to the printed reports of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons.

affected were making in different parts of the kingdom; nay more, he possessed so much influence over the Members of the Societies, that a single word of disapprobation from him would have sufficed to deprive them of courage, and to put a stop to all their proceedings.* That word, however, was never pronounced; on the contrary, all his sentiments, respecting them, were conveyed, not in the accents of reproof, but in the language of palliation, defence, and encouragement.

Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, had, during this critical period, displayed great firmness and consistency of conduct. Solely intent on preserving the vessel of the State, which was entrusted to his care, from the rocks and shoals with which she was surrounded, he pursued his even and steady course, unseduced by the wiles of party, and unintimidated by the blasts of faction. Exclusively occupied with the welfare of his country, his mind had no space left for envy or jealousy to fill.---Regardless of power, but as the means to promote this great end, he was willing to share it with all who

* I have heard this fact asserted by one of the most active, and most able leaders of the conspiracy, who avowed the determination of the Societies, should their means prove adequate to the accomplishment of their object, to produce a complete revolution in this country on French principles.

would join him in the noble attempt to attain it.---Such sentiments were as well calculated to extinguish all feelings of political hostility, as such conduct was to inspire esteem and confidence.---And hence arose that union with the distinguished leaders of the Whig party, which rendered his administration, in point of weight, character, ability, and influence, one of the strongest and most powerful which had ever been formed, and peculiarly adapted to the pressing exigency of the times.

CHAPTER XXX.

Affairs of France—Revolutionary means for creating an army—Relative force of the belligerent powers—Advantage of the French over their enemies—Difference between the British and Austrian Commanders — Their respective pretensions—General Pichegru takes the command of the French army—Adopts the plan of general Lloyd—The Emperor of Germany places himself at the head of the allied army—Defeat of the French near Landreçy—Siege and capture of Landreçy—Gallant action of some British and Austrian Light Dragoons, at Villars-en-Cauchie—The French make an irruption into Maritime Flanders—Masterly conduct of General Clerfayt—General attack on the French positions — The allies repulsed — The French attack the allies, and are defeated with great loss—Expulsion of the allies from the Netherlands — Murderous decree of the French Convention—Cowardly conduct of the Commanders of Valenciennes, Condè, and Landreçy, which are surrendered to the French, together with Quesnoy—The Austrians are driven beyond the Rhine—Crevecœur and Bois-le-duc surrendered to the French by the cowardice of their commanders; and the French Emigrants basely given up to the conquerors—The strong fortress of Nimeguen evacuated by orders of the Duke of York—The French army of the Moselle defeat the allies, and force them to repass the Rhine—The British fleet, under the command of Lord Howe, falls in with the French fleet, under Villaret-Joyeuse—Battle of the first of June—French defeated, with the loss of eight ships of the line—Success of the British arms in the West Indies—

Martinique and Guadaloupe taken—Saint Lucie, and other French islands, reduced—Guadaloupe re-taken—Internal state of France—State of parties—Despotism of Robespierre—Committee of Public Safety—System of terror—Numerous executions—Persecution of women—Fourteen young ladies executed together, for having danced at a ball with the Prussian Officers—Twenty females of Poitou guillotined—Ferocious remark of Billaud-Varennes—Dreadful state of the prisoners—Cruelty to pregnant women—Barbarous observation of Couthon—Trial and murder of the Princess Elizabeth—Execution of Count D'Estaing, of Thourét, and D'Espremenil—Memorable observation of D'Espremenil to Thourét—Anecdote of Thourét—Admirable reproof of Isabeau D'Youval, to the President of the Revolutionary tribunal—New schism among the Jacobins—The Cordeliers—They attack the *Men of Blood* — Chabot, Thomas Payne, Anarcharsis Clootz, and others, arrested—Execution of Hebert and Chaumette—Anarcharsis Clootz guillotined — Dies an atheist — Execution of Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and others, of the Cordeliers—New decree for extending the system of persecution—Decree for acknowledging the existence of a God, and the immortality of the soul — Cecile Regnault — Her execution, with sixty other persons, for a pretended conspiracy against the life of Robespierre — Barrere accuses Mr. Pitt of having planned this conspiracy—Fulsome adulation of Robespierre --- Sanguinary decree proposed by Couthon --- Servilely adopted by the Convention--- Subsequent Debates --- Divisions in the Committee of Public Welfare --- Meditated destruction of Robespierre---Project of either party for murdering their opponents---Weak and indecisive conduct of Robespierre ---The other Jacobins court a junction with the Brissotins ---Tallien attacks Robespierre in the Convention---Billaud-Varennes supports Tallien---Indecent conduct of the Con-

vention --- Refuse to hear Robespierre speak --- Tallien threatens to murder him---Rage of Robespierre---Decree of Accusation against the two Robespierres, Couthon, St. Just, and Lebas---The Gaoler refuses to receive them, and the Guards suffer them to escape---The Jacobins rise in their defence---Their cowardice and indecision---Active measures of the Convention---Robespierre and his associates seized, and executed without trial---State of Parties after the death of Robespierre---Proceedings of the Convention---Execution of Fouquier-Tinville, Lebon, and Carrier--- Law for suppressing all *Affiliated* and *Corresponding* Societies---The Jacobin Club attacked and closed ---Complaint of the Jacobins in the Convention---Character of the Jacobins by Rewbell--- Rapid progress of Sedition in Great Britain---New Convention projected--- The disaffected are trained to the use of arms---Plan of an insurrection in Edinburgh---Trial and execution of Watt and Downie for high treason--- Trials and acquittal of Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall---Evidence of Mr. Pitt--- Existence of a Treasonable Conspiracy proved---Acquittal of the State Prisoners, a proof of the excellence of the British Laws.

[1794] The system of terror which was completely established in France, gave to the rulers of that land an absolute dominion over the persons of its inhabitants, and over every thing which it contained.—Resolved to extend their sway over the neighbouring countries, to enlarge their own boundaries, and to obtain, by plunder, the means of supporting those gigantic efforts which they were thus enabled to make, they had armed, at the close of the

year 1793, nearly one million of men, three hundred thousand of whom were employed on the Northern frontier of the republic. To these the allies had not more than one hundred and forty thousand men to oppose. Besides the superiority of numbers, the French army had the advantage of being subject to the orders of one chief, as it were; while the allies, composed of different nations, were commanded by various leaders, who were very far from acting with that cordial spirit of co-operation which was so essentially necessary, not merely to ensure success, but to prevent defeat. At the very opening of the campaign, a difference arose between the British and the Austrian commanders; the Duke of York refusing to act in a subordinate station to the veteran General Clerfayt;—the pretensions of the former were supported by superiority of rank; and those of the latter by superiority of military talents, skill, knowledge, and experience. The difficulty was at length removed by the resolution of the Emperor of Germany to take the field in person.

To enter into a minute detail of military operations is foreign from the purpose of this work; it is intended merely to state the general result. The command of the French army was given to General Pichegru, an officer of great merit, and of equal modesty, a quality rarely

to be found in a French republican.—He wisely resolved, in conformity with a plan long before published by General Lloyd, in his political and military memoirs, to endeavour to turn the right and left flanks of the allies, and to keep the centre, which consisted of eighty-five thousand men, and was stationed between the Sambre and the Meuse, at bay.

The Emperor took the command of the allied army, on the heights of Cateau, in the middle of April.—The first operation determined on was the siege of Landreçy; but, before it could be accomplished, it was necessary to drive the French from their cantonments in the neighbourhood. This was done by a general attack, on the 17th of April, in which the French suffered pretty severely. The Prince of Orange then laid seige to Landreçy, which surrendered in a few days. On the 24th of April a very gallant action was performed, by two squadrons of Austrian Hussars, under Colonel Sentkeresky, and two of the fifteenth British light dragoons, under Major Aylett, amounting only to two hundred and seventy-two men in the whole. They had been sent on a reconnoitring party, and had found the enemy, ten thousand strong, posted at Villars-en-Cauchie. General Clerfayt, who had accompanied the party, directed these squadrons to attack the French. They accordingly made a

furious charge on the republican cavalry, which they immediately broke, and drove them behind their infantry. They then charged the infantry, which they completely routed, and pursued them to the very walls of Bouchain. In this brilliant affair, the French lost twelve hundred men, in killed and wounded, and three pieces of artillery. The Emperor ordered medals to be struck on this occasion, and given to the British officers who had so nobly distinguished themselves. Two days after the French made a general attack on the whole line of the allies, but were defeated, in every part, with great slaughter.

Pichegru, meantime, intent on his grand plan, sent fifty thousand men, under Generals Souham and Moreau, to force the positions of the allies on the right flank, and to overrun maritime Flanders. Here a variety of actions were fought, with varied success. In defending himself against a superior force, General Clerfayt displayed the greatest talents and courage; and the British troops distinguished themselves on various occasions. On the seventeenth of May the Emperor directed a general attack on the enemy, in order to drive them out of Flanders; but the attempt proved fruitless: on that, and on the following day, the allies, and particularly the British, suffered most severely. Pichegru, resolved to improve the advantage

which he had gained, and to profit by the confusion and dismay which he flattered himself he had occasioned, advanced, on the twenty-second of May, with an army of one hundred thousand men, with a view to cross the Scheldt, and to take Tournay. The attack began at five in the morning, and continued till nine at night. The French were ultimately defeated, with the loss of at least a tenth part of their force; while that of the allies amounted to three thousand men. But this vast effusion of blood produced nothing decisive. The French generals were perfectly regardless of the lives of their men, and careless how many were sacrificed, so that they attained their object. As fast as their ranks were thinned by the sword, they were filled up with fresh troops; while the losses of the allies were slowly, and with difficulty, repaired. The consequence of this disparity was such as might be expected. After various engagements, the allies were compelled to yield to the superior force of the enemy; and, early in July, the French were left in possession, not only of maritime Flanders, but of the whole of the Austrian Netherlands, which were again destined to experience all the miseries which the most ferocious banditti, that ever disgraced the human name and character, could inflict.

It now only remained for the republicans

to recover the fortresses of Valenciennes, Condè, Landrecy, and Quesnoy. In order to forward this important object, the Convention passed a decree, on the fourth of July, by which it was ordered, that if the garrisons of these places should refuse to surrender at discretion, within four and twenty hours after they had been summoned, they should be all put to the sword. These unmanly threats, worthy of the sanguinary wretches by whom they were devised, had no effect on the brave commander of Quesnoy, who sustained a siege of one and twenty days before he consented to surrender the place. Landrecy, provided only with a feeble garrison, was incapable of defence, and therefore opened its gates to the French. But Valenciennes, having been put in a complete state of defence, was capable of sustaining a siege of eight months, yet did the commander basely surrender this important fortress, on the 27th of August, without a struggle; delivering up more than eleven hundred loyal Frenchmen to the rage of their merciless enemies. Condè, too, though equally capable of resistance, followed the example three days after.

The French generals now advanced in security.—Jourdan, at the head of the army of the Sambre and Meuse, pursued the Austrians into the Principality of Liege, and, after various

engagements, succeeded in obtaining possession of the Duchy of Juliers, and the Electorate of Cologne, and in forcing General Clerfayt to repass the Rhine. The fortresses of Stephensward, Venlo, and Maestricht, were reduced by other divisions of the same army.

Pichegru, with the army of the north, followed the British in their retreat towards Holland. By the cowardice and treachery of Colonel Thiboelt and the Prince of Hesse Philipstadt, he obtained possession of the important fortresses of Crevecuœr and Bois-le-duc. At the last of these places, four hundred and eight French emigrants were given up to the sword, by the dastardly commander. At the beginning of November, the French began the siege of Nimeguen, without, however, the smallest prospect of success. But the Duke of York, to the surprise of every one, ordered the place to be evacuated on the night of the seventh, and the French took immediate possession of it.

On the side of the Moselle, where the French were commanded by Hoche, they were equally successful. The Duke of Brunswick, at the head of the Prussians, and General Wurmser, at the head of the Austrian army, made a long and obstinate stand against the Republicans, and great numbers were slain on both sides; but, at the close of the campaign, the Allies were forced to cross

the Rhine, leaving all the provinces on the left bank of that river in possession of the enemy.

Thus successful, in all quarters, by land, the French Convention deemed their power equally irresistible by sea. As they expected a valuable convoy from America, they ordered Admiral Villaret Joyeuse, who commanded the Brest fleet, to put to sea for its protection.—With this fleet the British, commanded by Lord Howe, fell in, on the 28th of May; a partial engagement took place on that and the following day; but on the first of June the British commander, having gained the weather-gage, was enabled to bring the French to a general action. For about an hour the French fought with great resolution, but their admiral then sheered off, and all the ships that were able hastened to follow him; while the British fleet was so crippled as to be unable to pursue them. Two ships of eighty, and five of seventy-four guns, however, struck, and were taken possession of, except one, the Northumberland, which sunk before the whole of her crew could be taken out. Another French ship of the line sunk during the action. But notwithstanding this victory, the American convoy, about which the French expressed so much anxiety, entered Brest harbour in safety, twelve days after.

The British arms were successful in expelling the French from the Island of Corsica, which was formally united to the Crown of Great Britain, by the unanimous desire of the inhabitants. In the West Indies, General Sir Charles Grey, and Admiral Sir John Jervis, succeeded in reducing the islands of Martinique, Guadaloupe, Saint Lucie, the Saints, Desirada, and Marigalante. But the ravages of disease so thinned the British force, in the course of the summer, that Guadaloupe was retaken by the enemy. The power of Great Britain thus proved as triumphant at sea as that of France did by land.

While, however, the arms of the Republic shed a dazzling, though delusive, glory around her, her internal state was such as to render, to her inhabitants, the scorching sands of the Arabian deserts an enviable residence, and a comparative paradise. At the close of 1793, the Brissotins being totally crushed, Robespierre reigned Lord Paramount of France, exposed to no opposition, and subject to no control. At the head of the committee of public safety, which might be considered as his privy council, he had for his associates four men of congenial souls,—Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, (the father of the Republic) Saint Just, and Couthon.—Carnot was admitted

as a member on account of his military knowledge, in which, of course, these upstarts were wholly deficient. From this committee, which was literally a committee of destruction, issued those mandates of death which filled all the numerous prisons of the capital;—for the detestable Parisians, to whose rebellious spirit the demolition of the fortress of the Bastille was owing, were now destined to experience a most appropriate reward, by seeing a new bastille erected in every street. To explain the frivolous pretexts on which these partakers of *liberty and equality*, these freemen of France, whose fate was deemed so enviable by the reforming citizens of Great Britain, were not only imprisoned, but executed; to describe the wanton acts of cruelty exercised upon them during their confinement, when every kind of barbarity was aggravated by every species of mockery; and to detail the flagrant iniquity of the judges and juries, though a task which, for the benefit of future times, should be performed, would require a volume of no moderate size. Though not less than forty persons, of all ages, and of both sexes, were daily consigned to the guillotine, the prisons, replenished as soon as thinned, were almost constantly full. The rage of these monsters in human shape seems to have been more particularly directed

against women;—to deprave their morals, to persecute their persons, and to forward their destruction, appeared to be equally the objects of their study. Fourteen young ladies, from Verdun, who are described, by a person who was imprisoned with them, as being of unexampled modesty, and having the appearance of virgins dressed for a bridal feast, were led together to the scaffold, on a charge of having danced at a ball given by some Prussian officers, in 1792, while the place was in possession of the allies. Twenty females, from Poitou, mostly peasants, were also executed together. While they were laying in the yard of the prison, one of them had an infant at her breast, which was forcibly torn from her, as they were going to conduct her to the place of execution.—Several of these unhappy females died on the way, but the savages guillotined their bodies. Many women, in a state of pregnancy, died in the different prisons for want of that assistance which their situation required.—And when Billaud Varennes was apprized of the fact, instead of giving such orders as would prevent a recurrence of the evil, he remarked, with true philosophical apathy, "'Tis so much trouble saved to the executioner."

So dreadful was the state of the prisoners

that many of them actually petitioned to be executed. To a woman, who applied for this purpose to him, Couthon said—"You have not been long enough in a situation which makes death desirable." A lady, in the last stage of pregnancy, was seized with the pains of labour at the moment when she was summoned to repair to the guillotine. Regardless of her situation, she was compelled to descend to the yard, where two soldiers dragged her towards the cart, till her agonies rose to such a height that they were at length compelled to put her into the first room they could find, where she was immediately delivered, alone, and without assistance.

Among the crowds who were thus hurried to the scaffold, with indiscriminate barbarity, was the Princess Elizabeth, the virtuous sister of Louis XVI. a lady of spotless purity of mind and character, whose whole life was a mingled scene of humble piety and active benevolence. She was charged with having conspired to restore royalty, with persons, many of whom she had never even seen;—not a witness was produced, nor a single attempt made to substantiate any one fact alleged against her.—She was condemned to death with twenty-four of her reputed accomplices; and she died, as she had lived, devout, tranquil, and resigned;

considering the sentence which consigned her to the scaffold as a welcome passport to a better life.

The Count d'Estaing, who had disgraced his rank by his conduct, fell, at this time, an unlamented victim to the revolution which he had so warmly cherished;—and the Duc de Biron paid the forfeit of his life for his attachment to the Duke of Orleans.—While under confinement, however, this nobleman had time for reflection;—he openly deplored the crimes which he had committed against his Sovereign, and justly ascribed his fate to the prevalence of those principles which he had so industriously laboured to disseminate. Thourét and D'Epresmenil were conducted to the scaffold together. The former had led the Norman bar, at the Parliament of Rouen; he had early adopted revolutionary principles, and when he was appointed a member of the States-General, he declared, before he went to Versailles, his conviction of the necessity of destroying both priests and nobles.* D'Epresmenil was a distinguished member of the Parliament of

* This fact was related to me by a gentleman who was a member of the Parliament of Rouen, and who received it from Thourét himself, in a conversation which he had with him before he left Rouen for Versailles.

Paris, and had then acquired great popularity by his strenuous opposition to the government, though his attachment to the monarchy was afterwards imputed to him as an unpardonable crime.—Struck with the similarity of their fate, though their conduct had been so dissimilar, D'Epresmenil said to his fellow prisoner—"This "day, Mr. Thourét, gives us a dreadful problem "to solve;—against which of us two will the "clamours of the mob be directed?" "Against "both, believe me," answered Thourét.

When Isabeau D'Youval, who had formerly held the office of chief clerk to the Parliament of Paris, was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, which now sat at the Palais, where the Parliament formerly held their sittings, the president said to him, with a malignant sneer, "You must recollect this hall?" "Yes," answered he, "this is the place "where innocence formerly sat in judgment on "crime, but where criminals now condemn the "innocent!", Such incidents are pregnant with instructive lessons.

The wanton cruelties now exercised, however, were viewed, even by some of the most sanguinary revolutionists, with disapprobation; not that these men had any humane scruples which made them object to the effusion of blood, when any purpose was to be answered by shedding it,

but they did not like to see it shed useless and unprofitably; besides, it is highly probable, they began to fear for themselves. Happily for the cause of humanity, one schism was no sooner healed than another broke out among the Jacobins.—After the extinction of the Brissotin party, the Cordeliers, another branch of the Jacobins, sprung up; at the head of these were Danton, Fabre D'Eglantine, Camille Desmoulins, Hebert, and Chaumette; and, could they have agreed among themselves, they would have formed a very powerful opposition to Robespierre and his associates;—for they had none of that timidity and irresolution which marked the feeble conduct of the Brissotins.—But the three first of these revolutionary heroes, and in particular Danton, who had acquired wealth by the revolution which he wished to enjoy in peace, could ill-brook the beastly manners, and brutal conduct, of the other two, whose constant declamations against riches, which they represented as infallible proofs of an aristocratic spirit, were by no means pleasing to their associates.

Danton, though he knew that four of the five leading members of the Committee of Public Safety were his enemies, thought he could rely on the friendship of Robespierre, who professed the strongest attachment to him.—

To Robespierre, then, he opened his mind, respecting the threatened rupture between the Jacobins and the Cordeliers; and this sanguinary wretch, who had openly justified all the massacres of September, 1792, now affected to stand forth the advocate of humanity.—He represented, indeed, not the *inhumanity*, but the *inutility*, of such constant executions, and Robespierre affected to coincide with him in opinion, but declared his inability to controul the furious Jacobins with whom he was associated; he even carried his hypocrisy so far as to connive at the arrest of Chabot, Thuriot, Bazire, Delaunay D' Angers, Paine, and Clootz, and even encouraged Camille Desmoulins to attack the *men of blood*, as they were emphatically and appropriately called, in his writings. The public were thus indebted to Robespierre for the discovery of many atrocious acts, which tend to elucidate this period of the revolutionary history; for Camille Desmoulins now directed his attacks, in a paper called *Le Vieux Cordelier*, against the Jacobins of the Committee of Public Safety, and those of the Commune of Paris; with the materials of which he was supplied by Philippeaux, who detailed all the massacres which they had ordered, and even charged them with sending troops on purpose to be defeated, that the troubles in La Vendée might be prolonged.

Soon after this, Hebert, Chaumette, and several others, were arrested, thrown into prison, and executed, to the great joy of the volatile Parisians, who hailed, as their idol, one day, the very men whose death they applauded the next. Anacharsis Clootz, *the orator of the human race*, was guillotined at the same time. This man, while in prison, uttered the most horrible blasphemies, styled himself *the personal enemy of Jesus Christ!* and really died, as he had lived, a confirmed Atheist. The exultation of the people, on the execution of Hebert and his associates, filled Robespierre with alarm, but he had proceeded too far to retract. Danton, meanwhile, by dividing the Cordeliers, had paved the way for his own ruin.—He had been completely duped by Robespierre, and, on the 30th of March, he, with his friends, Lacroix, Camille Desmoulins, and Philippeaux, were arrested; in a few days they were tried, with several others, condemned, and executed;—Danton predicting, in his last moments, that Robespierre would speedily follow him.

The time at which the prediction of this expiring jacobin was to be fulfilled was not far distant. Robespierre now feeling the plenitude of his power, resolved to exert it to the utmost. He immediately disclosed his intention of extending the system of persecution,

and, comprehensive as it already was, the wonderful ingenuity of his diabolical mind contrived means for bringing within its grasp a still greater number of objects than it had hitherto embraced, and for enlarging the mass of victims to be sacrificed on the altar of jacobinism. A new decree was passed by the servile Convention, in which the forbearance to denounce uncivic language, or the utterance of complaints against the revolution, with other acts of omission and commission, equally harmless, were declared to be crimes, and liable to various degrees of punishment, from imprisonment to transportation and death.

But Robespierre, although he acted as if he believed there was no God, had ever professed his disgust at the conduct of the Atheistical zealots; and had declared, in the Jacobin Club, that those who wished to suppress the celebration of mass were greater fanatics than those by whom it was performed; and that, under pretext of destroying religion, a faction was labouring to make a religion of Atheism itself. This was perfectly true; but the conduct of Robespierre had been uniformly such as to render it impossible to believe that, in making this declaration, and in acting as he now acted, he was influenced, in the smallest degree, by a regard for religion. It is most probable that, finding every effort to eradicate all religious

and moral principles from the human mind either abortive or only partially successful,—that observing, where the attempt succeeded, it produced a set of wretches equally desperate and untractable, without any bond of attachment or motive of obedience;—and that the purpose for which this horrible system had been originally adopted, had been fully answered by the destruction of all those virtuous priests who were considered as *refractory*, and by the complete confiscation of all the property of the church, he conceived that, by giving a legal sanction to religious worship, he might mitigate the enmity of numbers, and more effectually crush the remnant of a faction who had dared to dispute with him the possession of supreme power. Whatever was his motive, he made a long report to the Convention, on the 7th of May, in which he ascribed, and not without reason, many of the plots against the government to the prevalence of Atheistical principles; (to which he might, with at least equal truth, have imputed the conduct of the government itself;) and he concluded with moving a decree, the only laudable object of which was, the sanction of the freedom of religious worship.

This decree was adopted, of *course*, by the Convention, who would, with the same abject acquiescence, have given their sanction to it if

its object had been to consecrate the worship of Satan. But the presumption which stamped the very face of it, rendered it nearly as disgusting to every sober Christian, as the public profession of Atheism, by the Convention, on a former occasion. It began by *an acknowledgement* of the existence of a Supreme Being, and of the immortality of the soul, (as if these were adventitious, circumstances to which the characters of truth could not be attached without their *fiat*) proclaimed in the same dry dictatorial style in which these philosophical legislators had been accustomed to pronounce their political apothegms on the liberty and equality of their citizens, and on the unity and indivisibility of their Republic. After such an acknowledgment, they could not dispense with the worship of the Deity; festivals, therefore, were instituted on every tenth day, or decade, to his honour; but, at the same time, there were associated with him, in this mark of distinction, murderers, rebels, and regicides; Marat, and other revolutionary worthies, as well as the various passions and accidents to which human nature is subject, having similar honours conferred on them. This strange mixture of religious worship, and Pagan idolatry, sufficiently proves, that the delusion of the people was the principal aim of Robespierre in his extraordinary decree; which,

from a vanity peculiar to the French, was ordered to be printed and translated into all languages. In commemoration of this event, his friend and coadjutor, David, painted a large picture, in which he impiously gave to the figure of the Creator the face of Robespierre!

At this time an incident occurred which served to raise Robespierre in the estimation of the execrable and credulous Parisians.—A young woman, named Aimée Cecile Regnault, whose father was a stationer at Paris, having a wish to see Robespierre, called at his lodging in the evening, and, on being told that he could not be seen, shrewdly remarked, that a public functionary ought to be visible at all hours. This insult to the majesty of the Dictator was sufficient to ensure her immediate apprehension.—On her examination before the Conventional Committees, she observed, with more good sense than fell to any of their members, "That she would prefer one King to fifty thousand tyrants; and that she went to Robespierre's lodging merely to see how a tyrant looked." But she peremptorily disclaimed all intention of doing him any personal injury; nor, indeed, does it appear that she was provided with any instrument for the purpose; and it was made evident that she had neither accomplice nor confidant. This event, which in any other

town in the world than Paris, would have excited ridicule and contempt, was treated as a matter of importance, and as an infallible proof of a conspiracy against the invaluable life of Robespierre; who, accordingly, received numerous congratulations on his miraculous preservation; while Barrere, with his usual impudence, accused Mr. Pitt of contriving the plot; and Robespierre, affecting a courage which he did not feel, made an offer of his life at the shrine of his country. But the most iniquitous part of this disgraceful transaction remains to be noticed.—The unhappy girl, and one l'Amiral, who, from a motive of private revenge, had attempted to shoot Collot D' Herbois, with sixty other persons, were, without trial, and without the examination of a single witness, declared guilty of a conspiracy against the Republic, and sentenced to die.

Nothing which the human imagination can conceive, in its most fantastic mood, or that Fancy could imagine, in her wildest reveries, however extravagant, and however monstrous, could exceed the fulsome adulation which now poured upon Robespierre, with unexampled profusion, from private individuals, and from public bodies, in every part of France.—His face, it has been seen, was given to the Almighty;—his name was assigned to a planet; on him was bestowed

the appellation of the Messiah;—in short, every thing that was great, good, and virtuous, was represented, by these impious, profligate, and wretched people, as united in his person — The documents containing the daring proofs of this horrible degradation of national character have, fortunately for the historian, been preserved, or credulity itself would be tempted to withhold its belief from them.

But with all the power which he enjoyed, with all the engines of destruction which he possessed, Robespierre was not yet satisfied;—for, on the 10th of May, Couthon, his associate in the Committee of Public Safety, proposed a decree more atrocious, if possible, than any which had passed from the first dawn of the reign of terror to the present moment.—It not only professed to regulate the proceedings of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and to fix the number of its judges, but went to establish many new capital offences. Among the acts which were thus to be rendered capital, were—the vilifying the National Convention, or the Revolutionary Republican Government,—the deceiving the people, or their representatives, in order to induce them to take measures contrary to the interests of liberty,—the spreading false news,—endeavours to mislead the opinion, and hinder the instruction, or deprave the morals, of the

people, to corrupt the public conscience, and alter the energy and purity of the revolutionary and republican principles, or arrest their progress, whether by counter-revolutionary, or insidious, writings, or by any other machinations. To these, and many other acts, equally vague and undefined, was the punishment of death proposed to be affixed. And that no difficulties might be interposed to the conviction of any man whom the tyrant wished to destroy, all past rules of evidence were abrogated; and henceforth it was expressly declared, that, if there existed proofs, whether material or moral, independent of testimonial proof, no witnesses were to be called, unless it should be deemed necessary for the detection of accomplices, or reasons of great public importance. No witnesses were to be called either for the prosecution or for the prisoner, except by the public accuser; and, in order to abridge the proceedings, no council were to be allowed to the prisoners.

Great, however, as the authority of Robespierre was, and abject as the submission of the Convention had hitherto been, this monstrous decree was too terrific not to alarm even the Jacobins themselves. These men, whom no principle of justice or humanity could stimulate to resistance, acknowledged the powerful im-

pulse of personal fear, and shrunk from the sanction of a law which might be employed as an instrument for their own destruction.—And the recent sacrifice of Danton had convinced them, that Jacobinism itself afforded no protection against the hatred or the envy of Robespierre; while they plainly perceived, that no line of conduct, however determined, on the one hand, or however circumspect, on the other, could place them out of the reach of a law, which might, without much ingenuity, be made to apply to almost every act of a man's life. Still, though sensibly alive to the danger which threatened them, they did not dare to offer any direct opposition to the fatal decree, which, after a few weak observations, was adopted by the Convention.—It gave rise, however, to some subsequent discussions, which led to important consequences. In the sitting of the 12th of May, Charles Delacroix required an explanation of the new crime of depraving the public morals; and another member objected to the clause, which deprived prisoners of counsel. These objections certainly ought to have been made before the decree passed;—but they were not resisted on that ground; but their validity was contested on the ground of their merits.—Apprehensions, certainly not ill-grounded, having been expressed, the day

before, by Bourdon de l'Oise, for the safety of the Members of the Convention, who might be arrested under that decree, and sent to trial by the Revolutionary Tribunal, without that previous decree of accusation which the law required, Couthon now inveighed against him in terms of great asperity, and accused him of using the language of Pitt and Cobourg. Bourdon defended himself, but his defence only served to call forth the rage of Robespierre against him;—who abused both him and Tallien, for vilifying the committee of public safety. — One of those altercations ensued which so frequently disgraced the proceedings of these enlightened legislators. The most unvarnished language was used on both sides; the plainest contradictions were given and received; — and Billaud-Varennes closed the instructive scene by telling Tallien that he was an impudent liar, whose audacity exceeded belief.

But the support which, on this occasion, Robespierre received from Billaud-Varennes, proceeded from a congeniality of disposition, and not from any cordiality of friendship.— They were equally terrorists, and equally fond of blood; but each aspired to political supremacy; and Billaud-Varennes knew Robespierre well enough to fear him. When men are wholly

unrestrained by principle, the transition is short from the feelings of fear to the desire of revenge, —from a consciousness of the former to the resolution to remove it by the gratification of the latter. Among Robespierre's associates in the committee, too, was Collot D'Herbois, (originally a strolling player) who had lately returned from a sanguinary mission in the South of France, and who was attached to that party of low, resolute, Sans - Culottes, whose leader, Hebert, Robespierre had lately consigned to the scaffold. This man was as anxious as Billaud -Varennes for the destruction of Robespierre, and took less pains to conceal his enmity, and to disguise his views. It was to this division among the leaders of the Committee of Public Safety that Tallien, and his friends, were indebted for the preservation of their lives, which must otherwise have been sacrificed to the rage of Robespierre.

Both parties were now intent on the execution of their respective plans.---Each was busy in preparing efficacious means for the destruction of the other.—Robespierre, on his part, intrigued with the Jacobin Clubs,---the Revolutionary Committees,--the Commune of Paris, ---the Revolutionary Tribunal,---and the National Guard, all of whom were firmly attached to

him.—Confiding in their support, he suddenly ceased to attend the Committee of Public Safety, and formed a well-concerted scheme for the assassination of his enemies.—Those enemies, on their part, were more vigilant, and not less active.—Their exertions, indeed, were adequate to the known power, influence, and sanguinary disposition of their adversary. They applied to all who had cause for complaint against Robespierre,—and who had not?—imploring their assistance and co-operation in what they represented as a common cause, though the persons to whom they applied had almost equal cause for complaint against the applicants themselves. At this juncture, the small remnant of Brissot's friends, amounting to fifty or sixty members of the Convention, acquired a degree of consequence which they had little expected. In a struggle between contending Jacobins, their influence might turn the scale, in favour of either party, which they chose to adopt;—earnest, therefore, were the intreaties of Danton's friends to obtain their assistance against Robespierre and his associates.

Had Robespierre possessed that presence of mind, and that determined resolution, which are essential requisites in the leader of any party, but which are indispensably necessary in the leader of such a party as that which he led,

the superiority of his means were such that he must have triumphed over all his enemies, and the French republic must have acknowledged him for her absolute master.— But both his courage and his ability failed him, in the hour of trial, and he manifested his incompetency to support the dreadful character which he had assumed. Instead of patiently waiting the decisive moment, when his plan was to be executed, by the general massacre of his foes at a projected banquet, he repaired (on the 26th of June) to the Convention, from which he had absented himself for some time, and made a long declamatory speech, having no fixed object, and calculated to answer no one purpose, but to increase the number of his enemies, and to aggravate their fears. His speech, however, was ordered to be printed; and the Jacobin Club, to which he read it immediately after he left the Convention, received it with enthusiastic applause. Had he seized this moment for the destruction of his opponents, nothing could have resisted him; but the night was suffered to pass away without any decisive act, and the opportunity so lost never returned.

On the 27th of July he entered the hall of the Convention for the last time.—His friend, Saint Just, ascended the tribune, and repeated

the sentiments which Robespierre had himself delivered on the preceding day. But Tallien, whose fears rendered him bold, and made him impatient for the approaching crisis, interrupted him in his speech by a furious invective against hypocrites and murderers.—Then, turning to Robespierre, he said, "Will you, tyrant, pretend "to conceal your guilty designs against the "National Representation? Did not I, myself, "yesterday, see all the preparations of your "proscriptions? I was at the Jacobin Club, "where I heard you devote us all to the daggers "of your assassins, whom, at this very moment, "Henriot is assembling. They are prepared to "march, but we will prevent them. In this "hall you cannot fix your eyes on a man who "is not your enemy;—whom you have not "forced to be so. The country, the whole "human race, rise up against you, and we will "enforce their demands for justice."

The speech of this man, whose own hands were steeped in innocent blood, was received by the Convention with the loudest applause,—which encouraged Billaud Varennes, another sanguinary wretch, to throw off the mask which he had hitherto worn, and openly to declare himself against Robespierre, whom he now accused, in the most shameless manner, of having protected aristocrats, of having connived at

peculation, and of having, for some time, prevented the arrest of Danton. To these charges, which were as ridiculous as they were false, he added another, which had some foundation in truth—namely, a design to destroy the Convention.

This foolish speech of Billaud afforded Robespierre an advantage which, had he been allowed to profit by it, would, probably, have promoted that division among his enemies which would have saved him from impending destruction. But Tallien and his coadjutors would not suffer him to be heard; they overpowered his voice with their own clamours of "Down with him;—down with the tyrant!" while Tallien, brandishing a dagger, declared he would instantly plunge it into the tyrant's heart, unless the Convention consigned him to the hands of justice. Tallien himself, though not in the tribune, assumed that privilege of speech which he unjustly withheld from the party accused. He spoke for some time and with great art; and his motion for rendering the sittings permanent, until the creatures of Robespierre should be arrested, was carried; as were others, made by Billaud Varennes and Delmars, for the apprehension of Dumas, Boulanger, Dafraise, Henriot, (the commander of the National Guard) and his whole staff.

It was now to be considered what was to be done with Robespierre;—but those who were bent on his destruction resolved that no discussion should precede it. Many of the members, though by no means friendly to him, thought it highly improper to condemn him without hearing what he had to urge in his own defence.—They were prevented, however, from delivering their sentiments by the perseverance of Tallien and his associates, who used force to repel those who attempted to ascend the tribune. Robespierre, foaming with rage, ran from one end of the hall to the other, appealing, alternately, to the members and to the galleries, but equally in vain. —He appealed also to the chair, now filled by Thuriot, who turned a deaf ear to his intreaties, and drowned his voice with the noise of his bell, which he incessantly rang. "For the last time," said Robespierre, "President of Assassins," and never was man more truly characterized, "I demand to speak!" The demand, however, was rejected; and, after a long and violent altercation, more worthy a den of thieves than an assembly of legislators, *a decree* of *accusation* was unanimously preferred against him, on the motion of Louchet, in which his brother was, at his own request, included. Similar decrees were passed against his friends, Couthon, Saint Just, and Lebas. The prisoners

were sent to the Luxembourg, escorted by guards devoted to Robespierre;—the keeper of the prison refused to receive them, and they were easily rescued by the mob, who experienced no resistance from the guards. They immediately repaired to the Commune, which, apprised of the proceedings in the Convention, had already assembled. They swore, to a man, that they would remain faithful to Robespierre and his friends; they administered a similar oath to the people; declared themselves in a state of insurrection; and were joined by several of the Revolutionary Committees. The Mayor of Paris, Fleuriot Lescaut, the Solicitor to the Commune, Payan, and Coffinhal, a vice-president of the Revolutionary Tribunal, were amongst them; and their numbers were continually increasing. The rumour of Henriot's apprehension having reached them, Coffinhal instantly sallied forth, with a few resolute followers, and rescued him. Henriot came directly to the Commune, and brought with him a powerful reinforcement.—The Jacobin Clubs were, on their part, most active; the Conventional Guard were gained over;—and nothing but courage, decision, and energy, in Robespierre and his friends, was wanting, even now, to ensure his success.

The Convention, meanwhile, were not inactive; they proceeded to declare Robespierre and his adherents *outlaws;*—they took measures for arming the Sections; and they appointed Barras to command them. Paris now seemed to be destined, once more, to become the scene of a civil war, and her streets seemed to be again doomed to flow with the blood of her citizens. While the Convention were summoning the Sections to arms, Henriot, attended by what soldiers he could collect, hastened to summon the Convention itself to appear before the Commune. As his courage, however, required the stimulus of liquor, he had drunk to excess, and became an object of derision to the men he commanded.—The Convention outlawed the whole Commune; and the troops refused to obey the orders of their leader.—Henriot now returned to the Town House, where all was confusion, indecision, and dismay. These men, who had lately kept twenty millions of their countrymen in a state of constant alarm and stupefaction, were now so dreadfully alarmed, and stupefied, themselves, that they knew not how to act.—This strange state of things continued till night; by which time Barras had collected a few armed followers, with whom he advanced to the Town House. This focus of rebellion, whence, for a time,

those sanguinary decrees had issued which made every Frenchman tremble for his life; this arsenal of revolt, which long supplied the means of destruction to subordinate agents; this asylum for the most violent and furious spirits of republican France; capable as it was of resistance, became panic struck, and suffered itself to be subdued by a handful of men.— Bourdon de l'Oise, who had accompanied Barras, read the proclamation of outlawry, and then rushed into the Town House, armed with a sabre and pistols, and accompanied by many of his followers. Not the smallest attempt at resistance was made. — Robespierre's brother leaped out of a window and was taken miserably bruised. Lebas blew out his brains. Henriot, to whose misconduct all these disasters were ascribed, was thrown out of a window by Coffinhal, and took refuge in a common-sewer, whence he was dragged by some soldiers, who beat out one of his eyes. Coffinhal, himself, escaped, for a time, but was afterwards apprehended. Couthon was seized. — Robespierre was fired at twice by a soldier, who wounded him in the head, and broke his jaw; and in this state he was conducted before the committee of General Security. The Convention having refused to see him, he was taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal, (on the 28th

of July) together with twenty of his adherents, and, as they were outlaws, the form of a trial was dispensed with; and, their persons being identified, they were all condemned to die. They were conveyed to the scaffold, that same evening, amidst the universal execrations of the Parisians, who flocked, in crowds, to witness their execution. On the following day, sixty-two Members of the Commune, who had also been outlawed, experienced the same fate; as did some of the principal judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

The Friends of Humanity could not fail to contemplate this struggle with heartfelt satisfaction; for, which ever party prevailed, *their* cause must be served; while, however great the slaughter which might result from the conflict, it could only be considered as an act of retributive justice. All the combatants were, literally, *men of blood*; they had murdered their Sovereign and his family; they had consigned thousands, and tens of thousands, to the scaffold, without scruple and without remorse; and they who now exclaimed against the sanguinary projects of Robespierre, condemned them only because they affected themselves.—Tallien, the leader of the conspiracy,—for the whole transaction bore not one feature of a legal proceeding,—exhibited not a single proof of a regard

for *justice;* he had been guilty of nearly as many murders as Robespierre himself;—he was deeply implicated in the massacres of September,—and, as one of the proconsuls in the South, he had displayed the most sanguinary disposition, until the ferocity of his nature was softened by the influence of love. In short, it was a contest between rival tygers, and, had they all perished in the struggle, humanity would have had reason to rejoice.

Never was a more contemptible race of beings assembled in one body, than those who now enjoyed the supreme power in France—the members of the National Convention. They possessed no one qualification for the situations which they held:—Murder, by thinning their ranks, had deprived them of the small portion of talents which they originally possessed. They had, however, ample ability to do mischief; and they seemed still anxious to exercise it. Though the least portion of common sense would have sufficed to convince them, that the adoption of a mild and merciful system of government was not merely the best, but the only, means of preserving the popularity which they had acquired by their opposition to Robespierre, they displayed not the smallest disposition to have recourse to it. The sanguinary Barrere, on the contrary, announced, in the

name of the committees, the continuance of the system of terror. But Tallien, Legendre, (the butcher) and some of their immediate followers, began to fear that they had only destroyed one set of tyrants to become subject to another; they, therefore, assumed the new appellation of *Thermidorians*, from the republican name of the month in which Robespierre was guillotined, and avowed themselves advocates for a more moderate system. Aware of their own insufficiency to form a party, strong enough to resist the Terrorists, who were now led by Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and Barrere; they paid court to the Brissotins, their union with whom gave them the preponderance in the Convention.

The superiority thus acquired was used for the laudable purpose of bringing to justice some atrocious criminals, who had hitherto escaped the sword of justice.—Among these were Fouquier Tinville, the public accuser; Joseph Lebon, the proconsul, at Arras; and Carrier, the conventional delegate at Nantes; than whom the revolution, so fertile in crimes, had not produced three more sanguinary monsters. In proposing, however, the apprehension of the first of these Jacobins, Freron adopted the very language of Jacobinism itself; he moved, "That he should be sent to expiate,

" in hell, the blood which he had shed upon " earth;—or, in other words, for a decree of " accusation against him." These men attempted to exculpate themselves, and Carrier in particular, by asserting, that they had only acted in obedience to the orders which they had received from the government; and that they had even received the thanks of the Convention for their conduct. Though these were not bad arguments, as applied to their accusers, still they were not suffered to avail them, and they all paid, with their blood, the forfeit of their crimes, to the great satisfaction of all but their immediate associates.

But still the Terrorists obstinately maintained their ground, and contended for the victory; and it is probable they might have ultimately prevailed, but for an able manœuvre of Freron, in procuring a decree to sanction the complete liberty of the press. As soon as this was obtained, numbers of publications were circulated, for the purpose of disposing the public mind to a moderate system of government; and the effect produced was fully equal to the expectations of the party. Another law, which they induced the Convention to pass on the 16th of October, conduced still more to the success of their projects.—By this law it was declared, that all affiliations, aggrega-

tions, federations, and correspondences, in a collective name, between societies, however denominated, should be discontinued, as subversive of government, and hostile to the unity of the republic.—No petitions, or addresses, were to be presented in a collective name; nor was any such, if presented, to be noticed by any public body. It enacted, that every society should immediately prepare a list of all its members, adding to each his age, place of birth, profession, and residence, before and since the 14th of July, 1789; and the date of his admission into the society; which lists were to be delivered to officers appointed to receive them.—And every person who should not comply with the provisions of this law was to be considered as *suspected*, and imprisoned accordingly. Six months before, the man who should have dared to propose such a decree would, assuredly, have expiated with his life the temerity of his attempt. But the death of Robespierre had made such a change, that a measure which struck, as it were, at the very existence of the Jacobins, was suffered to pass with very little opposition. By this decree all those *affiliated* and *corresponding* societies, which had been the grand engines by which the revolution, with all its concomitant horrors, had been produced, confirmed, and prolonged,

were deprived of all the means of mischief, and of all the powers of revolt. The very body which had given its sanction and protection to their most atrocious proceedings, — who had considered as rebels all who dared to question their purity, or to impeach their patriotism,— who had even used them as schools for the instruction of their troops in revolutionary tactics,—now publicly proclaimed the infamy of their character, the destructive tendency of their conduct,* and the incompatibility of their existence with any form of government, however despotic, severe, and absolute. And yet their English admirers did not blush to reprobate the conduct of the British Ministry in the adoption of legislative measures for the suppression of similar societies in this country!

Still the Jacobin Club at Paris continued its sittings, and vented its rage with characteristic violence; and still many members of the Convention continued their names on its books, and defended its proceedings in their seats. But every attempt to obtain a decree to prohibit the members of the Convention from belonging to this pestiferous society proved

* Bentabolle, in his speech of November 5th, complained of the speeches at the Jacobin Club, as having a direct tendency to excite murder and civil war.

fruitless; and it was left for a body of young men, attached to Freron, to supply the defect of legislative interference.—On the 9th of November they assembled in the different coffee-houses in the Palais Royal, and proceeded together to the hall of the Jacobins; and, having gained admission, by force, they belaboured the debating patriots with their sticks, administered the appropriate correction of the rod on the female maniacs who attended the sittings, and dispersed the whole Society. The members of the Club, in the Convention, represented this outrage as unparalleled in the annals of the revolution; in their estimation, it was a murder, a massacre, equal to the massacres in La Vendée, and called for exemplary vengeance. But their clamours were treated with merited contempt; and Rewbell, by a brief summary of their proceedings, compleated their defeat.

"Where," he exclaimed, "was tyranny "organized?—At the Jacobin Club. Where "were its supporters and satellites collected?— "At the Jacobin Club. Who covered France "with mourning?—The Jacobins. Who "reduced whole families to despair, crowded "the republic with bastilles, and rendered the "republican system so odious, that *a slave,* "*loaded with chains, would not have exchanged*

" *his condition with a Frenchman* ?*—The Jaco-
" bins. Who are they who long to restore the
" *detestable system* under which we have lived?
" —The Jacobins." His speech produced such an effect on this versatile assembly, that they immediately passed a decree for shutting up the Jacobin Club, *provisionally;* and thus was this revolutionary volcano extinguished by the ingratitude of those who were indebted to it for the whole stock of their political knowledge, and for whatever portion of consequence they enjoyed in the new order of things, which it had so essentially contributed to produce; by Freron, Tallien, Legendre, and Rewbell.—Addresses now poured in from all quarters, congratulating the Convention on the firmness and decision of their conduct. Before the close of this year, the enemies of the Terrorists received a further accession of strength, by a decree for restoring to liberty seventy-three deputies who

* And yet, at the very period of which Rewbell here gives so accurate a description, were the Jacobin Clubs in Great Britain holding forth, to the deluded people of this country, the *happiness*, and the *freedom*, of the French, as objects of envy, for the attainment of which no sacrifice was too great. If Lord Stanhope read this speech of Rewbell, after he had proclaimed himself a Jacobin in the House of Peers, and did not blush, his feelings must have been impervious to the attacks of shame.

had been imprisoned for entering a protest against the proceedings in Brissot's case, on the 31st of May. Such of the Brissotins, too, as had fled on that occasion, had their sentence of outlawry revoked, and were restored to all their privileges, excepting only their seats in the Convention; though, as these had only been lost by a sentence which was now annulled, it was not possible to defend the exception, upon any principle of justice.

While such was the situation of the Parent-Society in France, those seditious clubs in Great Britain, which looked up to it as a model of perfection, had, by increased audacity, hastened the period of their own dissolution. After the dispersion of the British Convention in Edinburgh, and the conviction of some of its members, means were taken for assembling another Convention and delegates were sent from the London Corresponding Society to Scotland, for the purpose of fanning the flame of sedition. Men had been privately trained to the use of arms, as well in England as in Scotland; the necessity of providing arms had been strongly insisted on by the different Societies; and many pikes had been actually supplied in Scotland. In short, there existed the most convincing proofs, not only of a plan formed in theory, to procure, by legal

means, some partial change of the existing laws; but of a regular conspiracy to assemble, under the name of a Convention, a number of persons assuming to be representatives of the nation, for the express purpose of making their resolutions to be law, and of subverting, by their authority, the whole frame of the government, and the constitution of the realm, its Monarchy, its Parliament, and its fundamental laws.* The aim of the leaders in this conspiracy evidently extended to as complete a revolution in this country, as that which had taken place in France, subsequently to the 10th of August, 1792.

It was intended, by the Members of the New Convention, as soon as a sufficient number of arms had been procured, to enable them to act openly, to seize, in the night, the principal magistrates of Edinburgh, and officers of the law; the Banks, the Public Offices, guards, and prison, and, after enticing the troops to leave the castle, by kindling a fire in the middle of the city, to intercept them, on their return, by means of different armed parties, to be properly stationed for that purpose.†—In

* The Second Report from the Committee of Secrecy, appointed by the House of Lords, to inspect the Report, and Original papers, &c. from the Commons. P. 14.

† Mr. Dundas's Letter to the Marquis of Stafford, dated Whitehall, 23d May, 1794.

short, no means were omitted, within their ability to adopt, of whatever nature, to secure the accomplishment of their plan.

When sufficient proofs of these facts had been obtained, Robert Watt, and David Downie, two of the most active emissaries of sedition, were apprehended, and committed to prison. They were both tried at Edinburgh, on a charge of high treason. Watt's trial took place on the third of September; and Downie's on the 5th. They were both convicted and executed.

A Special Commission was, about the same time, issued for the trial of Hardy, and the other members of the London Corresponding and Constitutional Societies, who had been arrested in England. On the sixth of October, the Grand Jury returned a true bill against Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, John Augustus Bonney, Stewart Kyd, Jeremiah Joyce, Thomas Wardle, Thomas Holcroft, John Richter, Matthew Moore, John Thelwall, Richard Hodgson, and John Baxter, for *high treason.*—Of these, Wardle, Holcroft, Moore, and Hodgson, were not in custody. On the 28th of October, the trials began; and the prisoners chose to be tried separately;—Thomas Hardy was then put to the bar, charged, generally, with the offence of compassing his

Majesty's death. The speech of the Attorney-General, (Sir John Scott) who conducted the prosecution, took up nine hours to deliver; the evidence for the crown was not closed till the first of November, on which day the prisoner's defence was opened. It continued till the third, when the Solicitor-General began his reply, which he finished on the fourth; and, on the next day, the trial finished; and the jury, after three hours consideration, returned a verdict of *not guilty.* Mr. Horne Tooke, and Mr. Thelwall, were afterwards tried and acquitted, when the Attorney-General declined all further proceedings; and the other persons were, of course, discharged.—In the course of Mr. Tooke's trial, Mr. Pitt was examined, on the part of the prisoner, in order to prove, that the meeting at the Thatched House Tavern, in 1782, of which he was a Member, had the same objects in view, as the Seditious Societies of the present time. His evidence, however, totally failed to establish this laboured point.—Mr. Pitt recollected that Mr. Tooke had been present at one of those meetings, the sense of which was to use means to recommend a petition to Parliament, in order to procure a reform, but there was no such idea as a Convention of the people, or affiliated Societies; and he did

not consider that as a meeting of persons authorized to act for any but themselves.*

That the jury acted most conscientiously in acquitting the prisoners of the charge of high treason there can be no doubt; but the result of the investigation by the Grand Jury, who found true bills against the prisoners, was a sufficient justification of the prosecutions. Whoever is acquainted with the nature of the evidence required to convict a British subject of so heinous a crime, will be slow to draw the hasty inference that the prisoners were all perfectly innocent. It is impossible to read the printed accounts of the trials, without being impressed with a conviction of the existence of a treasonable conspiracy, which had for its object the utter subversion of the constitution and government.† Indeed, I can assert, upon

* See the printed trial of Mr. Tooke.

† Among the written documents produced on the trials, was a song, found at the house of Hardy, containing the following Stanzas:---

The starving wretch, who steals for bread,
But seldom meets compassion;
And shall a Crown preserve the head
Of him who robs a nation?

the authority of one of the Jurors, that the Jury themselves were fully satisfied of the existence of such a conspiracy; and had the parties been tried for a misdemeanour, there cannot be a doubt that they would have been convicted. There is reason to believe, that there existed a difference of opinion amongst

Such partial laws we all despise;---
See Gallia's bright example;
The glorious sight before our eyes,
We'll on ev'ry tyrant trample.

CHORUS.

Come rouse to arms, 'tis now the time,
To punish past transgressions.

Proud Bishops next we will translate
Among Priest-crafted martyrs;---
The Guillotine on Peers shall wait,
And Knights shall hang in garters.---
The Despots long have trod us down,
And Judges are their engines;
These wretched minions of a Crown
Demand a people's vengeance.

CHORUS.

Come rouse to arms, 'tis now the time,
To punish past transgressions.

After reading all the documents, it is impossible not to concur with the opinion of the Committee of the House of Lords, who truly observed:—"The ostensible object of the several meetings, whose members were to be the followers in this conspiracy; namely, Parliamentary reform, is a pretext that could impose on none but the most credulous, ignorant, and unwary." Report, p. 16.

the friends of ministers, if not amongst the ministers themselves, as to the nature of the charge on which they should be tried. And they who recommended that they should be tried for a treasonable misdemeanour only, acted most judiciously, and most wisely.—Their acquittal raised the spirits of the disaffected, who openly triumphed in the victory which they had obtained; not perceiving that this victory was the highest eulogy that could be pronounced on the British laws; and when the proceedings, against persons charged with political crimes in France, were compared with these trials, the comparison could not fail to excite, in the breast of every honest Briton, the proudest feelings of exultation.

CHAPTER XXX.

Meeting of Parliament---Usual course of proceeding interrupted by Mr. Sheridan---Increased confidence of the Opposition---They maintain that the non-existence of plots was proved by the acquittal of the persons tried for High Treason---This opinion controverted by the Solicitor-General, and Serjeant Onslow, who contended that the existence of treasonable plots had been completely proved on these trials---Conversation respecting the office of Third Secretary of State---Debate on the Address---Moved by Sir Edward Knatchbull, and seconded by Mr. Canning---Amendment moved by Mr. Wilberforce---Opposed by Mr. Windham---He represents the fatal consequences of a premature peace---Quotes a Seditious Song---Mr. Pitt's Speech---He admits the possibility of being obliged to treat with the French Republic; but expects no security except from a Monarchical government---Remarks on the conduct of Mr. Wilberforce, and his friends---His weakness and pusillanimity exposed---Mr. Pitt shews that the death of Robespierre had produced no change in the conduct of the French Government to Foreign States---Contrast between the English and French Constitutions; and between the Financial resources of the two countries---Enormous expenditure of France---Mr. Fox's Speech---Insists on the necessity of Peace---Compliments Mr. Wilberforce---Expresses his determination to call Ministers to account for their misconduct---Imputes the war to a

Court-Party, who hate Liberty, and are indifferent to the distresses of the people---Amendment rejected by two hundred and forty-six votes against seventy-three---Address Carried---Mr. Sheridan's motion for the repeal of the Act for suspending the Habeas-Corpus Act---He condemns Ministers---Reprobates the War---Insists that a verdict of Acquittal is a full proof of innocence---Is answered by Mr. Windham, who reproves the officiousness of his zeal; and points out the convenient defect of his memory---His character of Mr. Sheridan's Speech---He describes it as an appeal to the Jacobin Clubs---He defends the Whig-Leaders against the attacks of Mr. Sheridan; and opposes the Shield of Character to the Shafts of Calumny---Mr. Erskine and Mr. Fox support the motion---Motion rejected by one hundred and forty-four against forty-one---The Attorney-General's motion for renewing the Act of Suspension---Opposed by Mr. Lambton---Cases adduced by the Attorney-General to disprove the assertion, that the moral innocence of a party accused is established by a verdict of Acquittal---Bill Passed---Renewed operations of the French in Holland---They pass the Waal on the ice---Compel the British army to retreat---Base conduct of the Dutch to the British troops---The troops are exposed to great hardships---They reach Bremen---Kind and hospitable treatment of them by the inhabitants---They return to England---Emigration of the Stadtholder---Abolition of the Office---Treaty of Alliance between the Dutch and French Republics---Proposed augmentation of our Army---Opposed by Mr. Fox---Defended by Mr. Pitt---Mr Grey's motion on the subject of Peace---Explicit declaration of Mr. Pitt, that no form of government in France would operate as an impediment to Peace---He moves an amendment to the motion---True state of the Question---Mr Pitt answered by Mr. Fox---Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Henry Thornton support the motion---

Motion rejected by two hundred and sixty-nine against eighty-six---Amendment Carried---Similar motion in the House of Peers negatived---Mr. Pitt introduces a new plan for manning the Navy---Conversation on the Subject---Proposal of Mr. Harrison for procuring men for the Navy by a Tax on Places and Pensions---Absurdity and injustice of the proposal demonstrated --Debates on the Imperial Loan---Petitions for Peace---New motion of Mr. Grey on the Subject---Negatived by a great Majority---A similar motion negatived by the House of Peers---Mr. Pitt opens the Budget---New Taxes---Mr. Fox's motion for an inquiry into the State of the Nation---His remarks on Irish Affairs---Answered by Mr. Pitt, who moves to adjourn---Mr. Sheridan's Speech---Remarks on the necessity of removing Ministers --- Motion for the Adjournment carried --- Mr. Wilberforce's motion respecting Peace --- Mr. Windham's Speech---Motion supported by Mr. Fox --- Resisted by Mr. Pitt --- Negatived by the House --- Provision for the establishment of the Prince of Wales--- Difficulties attending the arrangement of it---Plan finally adopted by Mr. Pitt---He introduces the Subject to the House---Long Debates on it---Great difference of opinion ---Reflections on the Question---Statement of Mr. Sheridan respecting the Royal Message of 1787---Contradicted by Mr. Dundas--- Prince's right to the proceeds of the Dutchy of Cornwall, during his minority, discussed --- Disrespect shewn to the King---Jacobinical declaration of Mr. Fox,—that *the King is the Servant of the People*--- Just remarks of Mr. Dundas---Animadversions on the whole proceeding---Its final Arrangement.

[1794.] The Parliament met again on the thirtieth of December.—In the Speech from the Throne, while the disasters of the late campaign

were admitted, they were not allowed to supply any reasons for diminishing the vigour of exertion so necessary for the pursuit of the war. On the contrary, additional vigour, and additional efforts, were held out as the only possible means of bringing it to a successful issue.—The Dutch government, indeed, dispirited by the reverses which the allies had experienced, had opened a negotiation with the prevailing party in France.—But the King expressed his conviction, that no established government, or independent state, could, under the present circumstances, derive real security from such negotiations; and that they could not be attempted by this country, without sacrificing both her honour and her safety to an enemy, whose chief animosity was avowedly directed against her. The acquired sovereignty of Corsica,—the treaty recently concluded with America,—and the approaching marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, were the other objects recommended by his Majesty to the attention of Parliament.

At the opening of every Session of Parliament, it is customary, in the Commons, to read "the Bill for the prosecuting of Clandestine Outlawries," merely for the purpose of asserting their independence, by shewing their

right to proceed with any business they choose. —But as the Speaker was pursuing the usual form, and putting the question, as a matter of course, which had never given rise to any discussion, Mr. Sheridan rose to oppose it, in order to deliver his sentiments on the late trials, and on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.—Although the right to do this was unquestionable, yet the act was not only ungracious, but, at this period, when French principles were diffusing their baneful influence around, highly disrespectful to the King, the consideration of whose speech it, of necessity, delayed. The Opposition appeared to have acquired great confidence and boldness from the late successes of the French, and from the acquittal of the persons charged with high treason. They did not scruple to declare, that the House was not free, that the members were not capable of entering upon a fair, full, and impartial discussion of public questions, until the act of the late Sessions, for detaining suspected persons, was repealed. And they expressed the greatest exultation on the issue of the late trials, which, they boldly asserted, proved the perfect innocence of the parties accused, and demonstrated the non-existence of those plots and conspiracies which had formed the pretext for passing the obnoxious act in ques-

tion.* These preposterous assertions, however, were strongly repelled by the Solicitor-General, (Mr. Mitford) and Mr. Serjeant Adair, who insisted that what passed at the trials, far from negativing a treasonable conspiracy, had established its existence beyond the possibility of a doubt; and that a verdict of acquittal was no proof of innocence, but only prevented the party acquitted from being brought to trial again for the same offence. Similar opinions were maintained by Mr. Pitt, who considered that the Jury had only negatived the establishment of the charge, in the manner and form stated in the indictment, by adequate legal evidence; they had not disproved the existence of the serious grounds of alarm, or negatived that part of the charge which had been the reason and cause of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act;—namely, that these persons were parties to a conspiracy, and if not to treason, to a crime as great in moral guilt, and as dangerous to the rights and privileges of Parliament, and to the tranquillity of the country, as treason, or any other offence, possibly could be.

* See the Speeches of Messrs. Sheridan, Fox, Jekyll, and Lambton, in Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1794-5. P. 63---74.

The Opposition having attained their object by producing a debate, and uttering such sentiments as could not fail to produce their effect, out of the House, suffered the usual bill to be read.—This being done, they produced another subject of altercation, by contending that Mr. Dundas had vacated his seat, by accepting the office of Third Secretary of State, which had been abolished by the Act of the twenty-second year of his present Majesty, commonly called Mr. Burke's Bill, and the revival of which subjected the person accepting the situation to the loss of his seat in the House, if a member of it, and to the penalty of £500, if he continued to sit as a member.

It was shewn, however, that Mr. Dundas held precisely the same situation which he had held in the preceding session; and that, although there were three Secretaries, the Duke of Portland, who had recently accepted the situation of one of them, must be considered as the third Secretary. This point being settled, the address, on the speech from the Throne, was moved by Sir Edward Knatchbull, and seconded by Mr. Canning, who, as usual, enforced the topics recommended in the speech. Mr. Canning, in adverting to the misfortunes of the last campaign, remarked that it was true the Opposition had foretold the desertion

of the allies, and the astonishing exertions of the enemy; and he could not but confess, that, unfortunately, the event had justified the prediction. — Here, however, he pertinently observed, that it was no difficult matter to prophesy ill success;—if the prediction proved false, gentlemen would feel too much gratification in the success of their country, to think of the prediction; if it proved true, those who made it would triumph, as they would certainly feel some satisfaction at their own superior sagacity.—Some predictions, on the other hand, had been made by Ministers, and by those who had supported the war, which had been equally justified by the event. While the Opposition had represented the government of France as stable and secure, the Ministers, and their friends, had predicted its speedy downfal. When Robespierre was at the height of his power—when he governed France with the most absolute sway, — when his will was received throughout the republic as law—even then his ruin was predicted;—the event had demonstrated the justice of these predictions.

It was not left, on this occasion, to the systematic opposers of government, to propose an amendment to the address. That task was now undertaken by Mr. Wilberforce, who had originally supported the war; but who, from

the events of the last campaign, seemed to think it a hopeless struggle. The ground on which he opposed the address was, that it pledged the House to a continuance of the war, until a counter-revolution should be produced in France. To this pledge he could by no means consent; and, therefore, he proposed to declare to his Majesty the opinion of the House, that it was adviseable he should order a negotiation to be opened on such terms as to his wisdom and goodness should seem right. He was supported by several country gentlemen, who usually voted with the Minister; but who concurred in the opinion, that any attempt to make an impression on France would prove ineffectual, and that an effort should be made to procure peace on safe and honourable terms.

The proposition was strongly opposed by Mr. Windham, who contrasted the conduct, now recommended to the government, with that of the French, who, when attacked on all sides, instead of feeling despondency, only increased their exertions to meet the coming danger. He considered peace as not within our reach; and represented the consequences of it, if attainable, as worse than the continuance of the war. In the event of a peace, the intercourse between the two countries must be opened, when the French would pour in their

emissaries, and all the English infected with French principles, whom we had now the means of excluding, would return to disseminate their abominable tenets among the people. A Jacobinical Club would be erected at every man's door;—an inquisition would be immediately instituted into the right of property; and a Convention might even be established in the neighbourhood of the House of Commons. With what views would the French come? With the views very forcibly expressed in a song, sung, with great applause, at one of those *innocent* Societies, as they were now called, a stanza of which Mr. Windham repeated.

> "They come, they come, the myriads come,
> From Gallia to invade us;
> Raise, raise the pike,—beat, beat the drum,
> They come, like friends, to aid us."

They would go among our poor, among our labourers, among our manufacturers, and teach them the doctrine of liberty and equality. They would point out the gilded palaces of the rich, and tell them they ought to be plundered and demolished for the benefit of the poor. Having drawn this gloomy picture of the state of the country, in case a peace were made, he exhorted the House, and the country, in a strain of animating eloquence, to display a

spirit more worthy of themselves and of their cause.

The arguments of Mr. Wilberforce and his friends were combated by Mr. Pitt, who corrected an error under which they laboured, by shewing that the address by no means pledged them to continue the war until the destruction of the French Republic could be effected.—He then deprecated, most earnestly, the display of that pusillanimous spirit, which must be manifested, in a disgraceful solicitation for peace, after the experience of one unsuccessful campaign.

Mr. Pitt, finding himself suddenly indisposed, was anxious to deliver his sentiments on the question before he had heard the arguments of any of the leaders of Opposition; and he assigned this reason to the House. With a view to remove the scruples entertained by Mr. Wilberforce, and his friends, he declared that he by no means considered an approbation of the address as pledging the House *never* to make a peace with the *republican* government of France; —for the address said nothing more than that, from such a government as the present government of that country, we could not treat on terms that could be deemed secure. He admitted, as he had done on former occasions, that it might become necessary to open a negotiation

with the republic; but he repeated his opinion, that no peace would be secure, unless France returned to a monarchical system. He expressed his surprize, that those who had admitted the justice of the war, and the necessity of opposing the abominable system of the revolutionary government of France, should be disposed to abandon the contest, after one years ineffectual struggle.—It had pleased Providence, whose ways were inscrutable, that the power of France should triumph over all opposition;—but we should not, therefore, fall, without adequate efforts to resist it; we should not sink without measuring its strength. The consciousness of inability to pursue it could alone make him agree to retire from the contest. He would, at least, have nothing to reproach himself with on the retrospect. He would not yield till he could exclaim,—

—— Potuit quæ plurima virtus
Esse fuit, toto certamen est corpore regni.

Mr. Pitt spoke with great warmth, and justified his warmth by the peculiarity of his situation, in being obliged to oppose and contest the opinions of men with whom he had, on almost all subjects, been accustomed to agree. Indeed, the advice given by Mr. Wil-

berforce, Sir Richard Hill, and others, who had admitted the danger which threatened this kingdom from the revolutionary torrent of France, and who had acknowledged the necessity of resisting not only her destructive principles, but her insatiate ambition, was the advice of weak and pusillanimous minds. It never, surely, could have been supposed, that the subversion of the revolutionary system, or the destruction of the revolutionary power, could be effected in a single campaign; and yet on this ground alone could these members justify their present conduct. They voted for the war as necessary; they still maintained that it was so; and yet, in consequence of the disasters of a single campaign, they were willing to forego its object without a further struggle. In a word, they approved the *end*, but refused to supply the *means*, of attaining it. The pretexts, urged in support of this inconsistent conduct, were minutely examined by Mr. Pitt, who shewed, that although Robespierre had been destroyed, and some mitigation of the system of terror had resulted from his death, no change had taken place in the government, and none of the revolutionary principles had been disavowed.—On the contrary, the very basis, and the form, of the whole superstructure was carefully preserved; —

the republic was still one and indivisible;—it was still founded on liberty and equality;—its rulers still persisted in their efforts to revolutionize the neighbouring state;—and still their pride and their ambition led them to carry desolation and destruction into all the governments of Europe. It was well, indeed, observed, that the mild principles of the British Constitution were a standing reproach to the destructive tenets of the French Republican system, which were as intolerant as the rankest popish bigotry.

They could have paid very little attention to the motives and conduct of the leading men in France, who could derive from the late change any sanguine expectation of the adoption of a line of conduct more compatible with the peace and security of foreign states. *Fear*, not *principle*, influenced that change, which, though it afforded rather more security to the persons of Frenchmen, made not the least difference in the views or conduct of the rulers, in respect of other powers. In regard to this country, in particular, there was no more difference between Tallien and Robespierre, than there had been between Robespierre and Brissot. They were all actuated by the same malignant hatred; the same inveterate malignity; the same determined hostility, against

Great Britain; which they all considered as the only insurmountable obstacle to the accomplishment of their grand plan, for subverting all the existing establishments of Europe, to which every successive party has adhered with wonderful perseverance, and with inflexible resolution.

Many other strong arguments were pressed upon the House, by Mr. Pitt, in opposition to the proposed amendment; particularly applying to the insecurity of any peace which could now be concluded, and to the disadvantages under which we should labour on the renewal of war; deprived of all our allies, and unable, for some time, to bring our resources into action. Towards the end of his speech he adverted to the comparative state of the financial resources of the two countries.—He shewed that the expenditure of France had amounted to no less than the enormous sum of four hundred and eighty millions, since the commencement of the war.—It had cost them three hundred and twenty millions to expel the allies from the Austrian Netherlands, and to drive them beyond the Rhine. That no durable resources had enabled them to expend these vast sums was clearly demonstrated by the creation of an unlimited paper credit. It appeared, however, from the acknowledgements

of the French themselves, that so much of this money had been already issued, that any increase of it would be productive of ruin; and that the miseries which it occasioned aggravated all the calamities of the country. The whole circulating medium of France never exceeded ninety millions sterling. In August, 1793, assignats had been issued to the amount of one hundred and forty millions;—commerce was then in a declining state; agriculture was discouraged; population checked; and a forced loan of forty millions was adopted, on the belief, that more assignats had been already issued than could obtain circulation. In fact, the assignats soon lost nearly half their value. Afterwards, a louis d'or produced one hundred and forty-four livres, or six times its real value. The system of terror now begun, and credit was extorted by fear. Laws passed to compel the people to take assignats at par; a maximum was fixed on all saleable commodities; and the penalty of twenty years imprisonment was inflicted on every man, who, harassed and ruined by these violent measures, should abandon his trade or calling. Revolutionary committees were employed, in every part of the Republic, at no less an expense than *twenty-six millions sterling* per annum, to enforce compliance with the fiscal mandates of the Convention.

Before the death of Robespierre the assignats, in circulation, had been increased to two hundred and sixty millions; and, three months after that period, they had fallen to *one-fourth* of their nominal value. From these circumstances, Mr. Pitt inferred that the resources of the French must speedily fail; and that they would, consequently, be unable to make the same exertions which they had hitherto made.

This inference would have been just had it been in the power of the allies to force back the French armies beyond their own frontier; and to reduce the government to the necessity of maintaining their troops by the internal resources of the country. In such case, indeed, with an exhausted treasury, and diminished commerce, it would have been impossible for them to support the armed multitude which they had sent into the field, or to renew those gigantic efforts which the combined results of terror and profusion had enabled them to display. But it was part of their original plan to make the neighbouring countries defray the expense of their own subjugation, and provide the means for a further extension of the same ravages and desolation which they had themselves experienced. Thus they subsisted their armies on the plunder of foreign states, and, therefore, no calculation, founded on the in-

adequacy of their internal resources, could properly apply to the question of their inability to support the war for any given time, unless there existed a certainty of confining them within their own limits.

All the inferences and statements of Mr. Pitt were strongly impeached by Mr. Fox, who entered into a very long dissertation on the calamities of the war, and the necessity of peace. He paid some compliments to Mr. Wilberforce, but warned him, and his friends, that they must not expect that any assistance which they could afford him, in his attempts to obtain a speedy peace, would deter him from instituting an enquiry into the causes of the war, or from the adoption of measures for the prevention of similar calamities in future. The high and authoritative tone which he now assumed, ridiculous and mistuned as it was, supplied a strong proof of the value which he placed on this unexpected accession of Parliamentary strength. He ascribed both this war and the American war to the influence of a court party in this country, which hated the very name of liberty; and to an indifference, amounting to barbarity, in the Minister to the distresses of the people. Whatever effect his *arguments* might be calculated to produce must have been counteracted by such silly

declamation as this; which could only afford an apt thesis for the inflammatory harangues of the disaffected. Notwithstanding an addition of members, the Opposition divided only seventy-three in support of the amendment, which was rejected by a majority of two hundred and forty-six.

At the close of his speech, Mr. Fox had cast some reflections on the conduct of the Admiralty, which had been echoed by Mr. Sheridan;—but Lord Chatham was fully vindicated by Mr. Dundas, who explained the great exertions made by the Admiralty during his Lordship's administration, and the success of which they had been productive.—Twenty ships of the line had been taken or destroyed, besides twenty-eight frigates, and as many other ships of war; while we had lost only one sail of the line, three frigates, and sixteen smaller vessels. Previous to this discussion, Lord Chatham had quitted the Admiralty, and was succeeded by Earl Spencer.

[1795.] The Opposition, as has been seen, had displayed great activity at the opening of the present Parliamentary campaign; and, flattered perhaps by the additional numbers which had graced their last division, they resolved on a new trial of strength, on the 5th of January, when Mr. Sheridan proposed to repeal the act of the last session, which was

generally, though improperly, termed, an Act for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act. He entered into a long and elaborate declamation, in support of his motion, the object of which was to condemn the whole conduct of Ministers; to impeach the justice and necessity of the war; to deny the existence of all seditious and treasonable conspiracies; to insist that the innocence of the persons tried for high treason was established by the verdicts of acquittal; to abuse those noblemen and gentlemen who had recently accepted places under government; to revile the French Monarchy; and to panegyrize the Republic! On these various topics Mr. Sheridan expatiated with his usual zeal, wasting all the flowers of his fancy, and exhausting all the stores of his genius. The freedom of his animadversions, and the unguarded looseness of his charges, provoked a severe retort from Mr. Windham, who, in a speech, of considerable length and ability, replete with pointed censure, and cutting sarcasm, administered reproof, not more severe than deserved. He checked the officious zeal of Mr. Sheridan in commenting upon his conduct to Mr. Fox;—he corrected his numerous misrepresentations of facts;—he exposed his artful, but unfair, appeals to the passions of the populace;—he ridiculed his affected tenderness and sensibility;—and he demonstrated the weakness of his arguments, on

all the main points of the question.—In his remarks on Mr. Sheridan's triumphant panegyric on juries, and on the efficacy of their decisions in proving the non-existence of a conspiracy, Mr. Windham taxed him with a most convenient want of memory, which had led him entirely to overlook the decisions of those juries by whose verdicts Watt and Downie had been consigned to the gallows. In the extravagance of his respect for juries, he had mentioned the acquittals, but he chose to bury in silence the convictions, and artfully kept them out of sight. He asked Mr. Sheridan, whether he would deny that there were bodies of men straining every nerve, taking infinite pains, and exerting their malice, to subvert the order of government, on the model of the French Revolution, and, by means the most dangerous, namely, by appealing to the ignorance and miseries of the poor,—the very *stratum* on which those modern engineers, who knew their trade better than any former professors of their science, intended to carry on their *sap?* He characterized Mr. Sheridan's speech as a wretched, vague, coarse, rhapsody, founded on vulgar topics of extravagant declamation, fit only for the lowest orders of society, and calculated for the meridian of such hearts and intellects as it was intended for; such as those of the applauded Mr. Broom-

head, and the other *worthy citizens*, who were crammed into the *honest* Jacobin societies, scattered through the manufacturing towns of Great Britain.* Mr. Windham defended the Duke of Portland, himself, and other leaders of the Whig Party, from the sarcastic attacks of Mr. Sheridan, in a strain of dignified severity. Truly did he observe, "The calumnies cast on such things are only to be resisted by the shield of character;—to that my noble friends and I resort! I am truly sorry he is not ashamed of such low, mean traffic.—I defy him to shew a single circumstance that can tend to cast a shadow of doubt on our conduct.—The malice of the design is so corrected by the impotency of the effort, that I will not sacrifice a word in answering it."

It was in vain that *both* Mr. Erskine and Mr. Fox lent their united eloquence in support of their friend's motion.—It was lost by a majority of a hundred and forty four—*forty-one* only having voted in favour of it. And a few days after, the Attorney-General brought in a bill for leave to continue the provisions of this reprobated act. It was read a second time on the 23d of January, when the subject once more underwent a very long discussion. Mr. Lambton

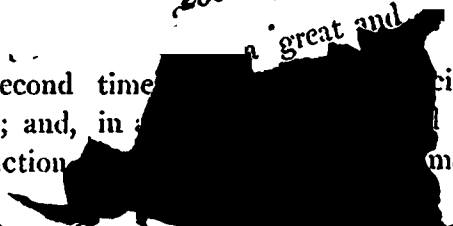
* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795. P. 174

took the lead in opposition to the measure, and was supported by Messrs. Jekyll, Erskine, Fox, and Grey; while the bill was supported, chiefly, by the law officers of the Crown. The Attorney-General, in alluding to the often-controverted point of the efficacy of a verdict to establish the moral innocence of the party acquitted, adduced some strong cases to prove that it could not possibly have any such effect.

No man, he insisted, who pretended to know any thing of the theory of the law; no man who knew any thing of its practice, would for a moment contend, that a verdict of *not guilty* was a full establishment of the moral innocence of the party accused. He instanced, in support of this assertion, the case of a charge of high treason being directly, and positively, supported by the testimony of a gentleman of the highest integrity, of the most unblemished honour, to the complete satisfaction and full conviction of every one who heard him;—still, if there were no other evidence, the prisoner must be acquitted, because the law imperatively requires *two* witnesses to establish every overt act of treason. Here, then, would be a verdict of *not guilty* in a case in which every person must be satisfied of the real guilt of the party acquitted. Other cases were adverted to, in which a prisoner must be acquitted by the jury

notwithstanding his own confession of his guilt; could any man in his senses think that, in such cases, a verdict of *not guilty* was a proof of the moral innocence of the prisoner? The Attorney-General, in further corroboration of his argument, instanced a remarkable fact which had occurred on these very trials.—While he was contending for the meaning of a paper published by one of the societies, and Mr. Erskine was maintaining that it would not bear the meaning for which he contended, that very society published another paper, avowing that their meaning, in the former publication, was precisely that which he had put upon it. Yet the law of evidence would not allow the Attorney-General to produce the second paper to prove the meaning of the first, because it had been written after the prisoner had been taken into custody.

Here were facts which could not be controverted, and which were sufficient to convince scepticism itself of the absurdity of the principle contended for; but it did not suit the purposes of the party to be so convinced; they did not choose to sacrifice, at the shrine of truth, any prejudice, or any pretext, which might serve either to encourage the spirit of discontent, or to direct the public indignation against the Minister. The bill was, however, ordered to be



[illegible] a great and [illegible]

read a second time [illegible] cisive majority; and, in [illegible] the final sanction [illegible] me a law.

During these politi[illegible] the French had, very unexpectedly, renewed their military operations in Holland, and, early in the month of December, 1794, they attempted to cross the Waal. The opposition they experienced was firm and, partially, successful; but the unusual severity of winter, by early rendering the water one firm compact body of ice, sufficiently solid to bear the troops and their artillery, enabled the French to accomplish their objects with comparative facility. All the efforts of the Stadtholder to rouse the spirit of the people to exertions adequate to the exigency which called for them having proved ineffectual, that Prince resolved to leave his country to her fate, and to emigrate to England;—whither, also, the British commander had repaired at the close of the year. It was now evident that the democratic party, in Holland, prevailed over the opposite interest, and that the presence of the French was rather desired than dreaded. Resistance was, however, still made to the progress of the French by the British, now under the command of General Walmoden. In December and January, some severe actions

were [redacted] played [redacted] English troops dis-
hono[redacted] and sustained the superior
num[redacted] the [redacted]n to retire;
an[redacted] had pushed on in great force,
between them and the Dutch coast, they were compelled to retreat, by a circuitous road, towards the north coast of Germany. During this toilsome and dangerous retreat, they experienced from the Dutch, in behalf of whom they had fought and bled, the most base ingratitude, and the most savage treatment. With the greatest difficulty could they procure, from these unfeeling wretches, either food or shelter; the inconveniences which they experienced from the inclemency of the season were thus aggravated, and their dangers increased. After suffering incredible hardships, however, the shattered remains of this gallant army reached Bremen, where, and in the neighbourhood, the kind, humane, generous, and benevolent, conduct of the inhabitants afforded an admirable contrast to the scene which they had lately witnessed in Holland. They remained here some weeks, and then embarked for England. After their retreat, the Dutch extended their supplicating arms to the French invaders; they hailed, as friends, the enemies of their name and race;—and hastened to conclude with them a disgraceful treaty,

by which they formed a perpetual alliance against Great Britain, offensive and defensive; consented to pay upwards of four millions sterling to the French to indemnify them of the expense of invading and plundering their country; abolished the office of Stadtholder; opened the navigation of the Scheldt; resigned their dock-yards to the French;—and, in short, subjected themselves, and their country, to the iron yoke of French tyranny.*

In order to counteract the effects of the secession of the Dutch from the [illegible] and obviate, as far as possible, the inconveniences of the approaching desertion of the Prussian Monarch, which, it was evident, would soon take place, it was resolved, by the Minister, to make a considerable addition to our army. On the 21st of January, Mr. Windham, as Secretary at War, laid the army estimates before the House of Commons;—when it appeared that the army, for the service of the present year, was proposed to consist of one hundred and nineteen thousand men, inclusive of invalids. In the course of the debate, which ensued on this proposal, severe censures were passed upon Ministers for the mode adopted for the increase of the army, by

* This treaty was signed at the Hague, on the 15th of May, 1[illegible]

suffering inexperienced youths to raise regiments for rank; and some instances of this kind, highly prejudicial to the service, were adduced by General Tarleton. It was further urged, that many of the men who composed these regiments were wholly unfit for service, some being incapacitated by age, and others by extreme youth. Other grounds of objection were pressed against the proposed augmentation, on the plea that the navy ought to be the principal concern of the country at such a crisis, and that our army ought to be but a secondary consideration. This plea was strongly urged by Mr. Fox, who asserted, that the army had much more than its due proportion when examined with the navy. He reprobated the project of sending more British troops to the Continent, as wild, visionary, and destructive; and he contended, that if more of the troops were to be so employed, the army was much too large. He dwelt long on his favourite topic of peace, and, in his zeal to promote it, denied the adequacy of the resources of this country to maintain the war against France. If the present was not the last, it was certainly an approach to our last stake.* Having charged

* Whoever is unaccustomed to appreciate the assertions of party men, and compares this declaration of Mr. Fox with his subsequent conduct, when Minister, *eleven years after this period,* in supporting the proposal for increasing the Property Tax, from *six* to *ten per cent.* will find some ground for astonishment.

Mr. Pitt with levity, in speaking of the misfortunes of the war, the Minister retorted on him, and appealed to the House, whether, in treating of those misfortunes, Mr. Fox, speaking in a tone of exultation, coupled with an affected lamentation, had not displayed a degree of triumph which the detail of our disasters was but ill-calculated to inspire? In describing our past failures, and our present situation, it was observed, that there certainly was much to lament, something to censure, but nothing to deprive us of hope. No division resulted from this discussion; the army estimates were all voted by the House.

It was thought proper, by the members of the Opposition, to divert the attention of Ministers from the important subjects by which they were naturally engrossed, in the present posture of affairs, by calling upon the House of Commons to record an abstract declaration of their *opinion*, that the existence of the present government of France ought not to be considered as precluding, at that time, a negotiation for peace. Mr. Grey was selected for the task of submitting this proposition to the House, which he performed with considerable talent, in a speech of great length, in which he described our situation as hopeless, and our Ministers as incapable, and undeserving of confidence; and

recurred to the old topic—the absolute necessity of opening an immediate negotiation with the French. To the motion of Mr. Grey, Mr. Pitt moved, as an amendment, "That, under the present circumstances, the House felt itself called upon to declare its determination, firmly and steadily, to support his Majesty in the vigorous prosecution of the present just, and necessary war, as affording, at that time, the only reasonable expectation of permanent security and peace to this country; and that, for the attainment of those objects, the House relied, with equal confidence, on his Majesty's intention to employ, vigorously, the resources of the country in support of its essential interests, and on the desire uniformly manifested by his Majesty to effect a pacification on just and honourable grounds with any government in France, under whatever form, which should appear capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries."

It was on this occasion explicitly declared by Mr. Pitt, that although the Ministers had been uniformly of opinion that it would be highly desirable to promote the success of any party in France which should be favourable to a monarchical form of government, the restoration of Monarchy, on the old principles, had never

been stated by his Majesty, by Government, or by Parliament, as a *sine quâ non*, as a necessary preliminary to peace. Not only was this the fact, but, farther, it had never been stated, that any one specific and particular form of government was deemed, on our part, necessary before we could negotiate for peace. His Majesty had disclaimed all desire to interfere in the internal concerns of France, as long as that country had abstained from interference with the governments of other nations :—till an act of direct and absolute aggression had been committed against this country, and till hostilities had actually commenced, his Majesty had strictly adhered to his declaration, and forborne all interference whatever. When compelled to interfere, be a manner agreeable to every experience and practice of the world, and justifiable on every ... principle of the law of nations, his Majesty still restrained himself to that degree on interference which was necessary for his own security, and for that of Europe.—The ... species of government which he then wished ... established, was not that which he ... most eligible ; it was not that which ... thought most free from objection ; but ... Mr. Pvernment which would be sufficient for ... the safety of other nations. When his ... was reduced to the necessity

of looking at the government of France, he looked at it, certainly, not without a wish which must naturally arise in every generous heart, that it might be adapted to the prosperity and happiness of those who were to live under it;—but with regard to negotiation and to peace, he did not look at it with that view, or for that purpose.—He could only look at it for English views, and for English purposes; to see whether it held out the solid grounds of treating, with that degree of reasonable security for the performance of engagements which usually subsisted, and was to be found in the existing system of the different powers of Europe, without being liable to that new and unexampled order of things,—but state of anarchy and confusion, which had for years existed in France. Such having been the true measure and extent of the declarations made by his Majesty, and by Parliament, it was conceived, that no man who looked back on them would wish that he had not made them; that no man would feel that they were not made on just principles, or that they did not arise from a fair view of the circumstances and necessity of the case.

Here the views and the declarations of government, respecting their intentions, or desire, of restoring monarchy in France, were

so clearly and distinctly stated, that they could henceforth be subject only to *wilful* misrepresentation. — In fact, it was always perfectly clear, to those whose eyes were not obscured by the mist of party, that the restoration of the French monarchy was never the *object* of the war; but was merely considered as the best *means* for the accomplishment of its object.— If the object could be accomplished without it, the war would, of course, cease; if not, it was not only the policy, but the duty, of Ministers to endeavour to restore the Monarchy.

Two questions arose on this discussion, on which the parties were at issue.---It was contended, first, that the form of government in a country with which we were at war ought never to be considered as having any influence on the security of a treaty; and, secondly, that the revolutionary government of France, at any time since the destruction of the monarchy, had been perfectly competent to afford the necessary security for the observance of any treaty which it might conclude with another country. The affirmative of these propositions was maintained by the Opposition, while the Ministers supported the negative.

Mr. Pitt asked if any man would say, that a nation like France, put into a situation perfectly new, into a situation directly the

reverse of all the existing governments on earth, destroying the foundations and the bonds of all political society, breaking down the distinction of all ranks, and subverting the security of all property; a government pretending to put a whole nation into a state of pretended equality, not the equality of laws, but an actual equality, an equality contrary to the physical inequality of man;—would any man say, that we ought to make peace with a government constructed upon such principles, which had attempted, by every means in its power, to molest its neighbours, to impoverish and distress itself, to propagate its pernicious principles, to make converts, and to hold out the means of seducing other nations, and which had followed up such conduct by open and direct acts of aggression, by a positive violation of treaties; and, lastly, by an open declaration of war? This country scrupulously observed a neutrality, while it could hope, or have a reasonable prospect, that the mischiefs of the French revolution would be confined within the territory which gave it birth. We remained passive spectators of the conduct of France, until the very moment when we, against our will, was forced into the contest.

Having stated his reasons for concluding that no treaty with the existing government

of France could afford the requisite security, Mr. Pitt proceeded to observe, that such a change might take place in that government, as would justify an attempt to treat with it. If such a change should occur, and such an order of things should arrive, through whatever road, and by whatever means, if the French gave to their government that stability, and that authority, which might afford grounds, not of certainty, but of moral probability (by which human affairs must be conducted) that we might treat for peace with security,—then would be the proper time to negotiate; but we ought, in prudence, to wait the return of such circumstances as would afford us a probability of treating with success.

All the arguments of Mr. Pitt were combated by Mr. Fox, who repeated his assertions, that the existing government of France was as capable of preserving the relations of peace and amity with other nations, as any other government; but he adduced neither arguments nor facts to destroy the efficacy of Mr. Pitt's reasoning on the subject. He asserted, indeed, that if peace were to take place, the French must disband their armies, and, if the mighty machine, which nothing but the *diabolical confederacy of despots* had put in motion, were once stopped, it would be impossible again to

erect it.* But, in the first place, it was by no means certain that peace could be obtained by any declaration on our part; and, in the next, if obtained, it did not follow that those effects would result from it. He still persisted in ascribing the murder of the King, the system of terror, and all the calamities which France and Europe had experienced, in consequence of the French revolution, to the confederacy, which he so emphatically characterized;—although it had been demonstrated, beyond the power of contradiction, or the possibility of doubt, that that confederacy was formed solely on a principle of self-preservation; that the members of it were extremely averse from war; that they exerted every effort to prevent its occurrence; and that they did not prepare for it until France had actually declared war against them! Mr. Grey's motion was supported by Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Henry Thornton, the former of whom, however, wished to alter the language of it. On the division, eighty-six members voted for it, and two hundred and

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795, p. 415.---Mr. Fox lived long enough to be convinced of the weakness of his own assertions.---He lived to see that peace with France for which he had so long, and so earnestly, wished;---and to see it productive of no one of those effects which he so confidently predicted as its necessary consequence.

sixty-nine against it;—and, on the division on Mr. Pitt's amendment, the members for it were two hundred and fifty-four, and against it ninety.

A similar motion, though not precisely in the same words, was brought forward, the next day, in the House of Peers, when Lord Grenville moved the same amendment, which had been carried in the Lower House.—The motion was negatived, and the amendment carried by eighty-eight votes against fifteen.

Much had been said, in the course of debate, during this Session, on the necessity of greatly augmenting our naval force. This, in regard to ships, was a matter of no difficulty; but it was not so easy to find a sufficiency of seamen for manning the ships, when equipped for service. Mr. Pitt, therefore, had directed his attention to the best means of facilitating the accomplishment of an object so important in every point of view.—And, on the second day of February, he opened, to the House of Commons, a plan which he had devised for this purpose. This plan was stated to be productive of two advantages.—It would first relieve the outward-bound trade of the country from the inconvenience resulting from an uncertain degree of pressing; and, secondly, it would prevent the necessity of an embargo, a measure which

had been resorted to in former wars. He proposed that every merchantman, previous to clearing out, should supply a given number of men, in proportion to its tonnage, for the service of the Royal Navy. This regulation would operate as an embargo on every individual ship, until it had furnished its particular quota. From an examination of the Custom House books for 1793, down to the month of September, it appeared that the total of the shipping of Scotland and England, employed one hundred thousand men, and that the proportion of men to the tonnage was about one man to every fourteen tons. It was proposed to take one seaman out of every seven that were employed; though it was not necessary that they should all be able men, as an option was to be offered to the ship owners, to supply two landsmen instead of one seaman. None were to be required of any vessel below the burden of thirty-five tons; every vessel above thirty-five and below seventy was to furnish one landsman; every vessel between seventy and one hundred and five tons was to find one seaman or two landsmen; and so on, in proportion, to one hundred and forty; and above that, progressively, one landsman was to be supplied for every fifty tons. The reason assigned for the distinction between large and

small vessels, as to the proportion of men they were to be called on to furnish, was, that the smaller ships made many more voyages than the larger ships, and had, therefore, much more frequent occasion for the protection of convoy. The whole number of men expected to be obtained by this plan, was from eighteen to twenty thousand. Mr. Pitt stated it to be also his intention to call upon the country for some supply of landsmen for the service of the navy; to be raised according to the number of parishes in the kingdom, and, reckoning one man for each, it might produce a force of about ten thousand men. Where the parishes failed to supply their men, they were to pay a fine larger than the bounty paid to volunteers. He had it likewise in contemplation to raise a number of men out of those who were employed in the inland navigation, on navigable rivers and canals.

To this quarter Mr. Pitt looked, and certainly not without reason, as a nursery for our seamen; as persons engaged in the Inland navigation, from the mode of their education, and the habits of their life, were well qualified for the sea-service. Such was the outline of Mr. Pitt's plan for supplying the navy with men. It was so far a better plan than the one which was pursued in France, before the revolution,

as it did not subject persons, following a seafaring life, to the necessity of registering their names, and the ships on board which they served, that they might be forthcoming whenever the approach of war might render their services necessary; but it was much more precarious and less efficacious. It was one step, however, towards the attainment of a great national object; and as the immediate adoption of it was not pressed upon the House, sufficient time was allowed for correcting any of its defects, and for supplying any of its deficiencies. Mr. Pitt, at this moment, merely moved for leave to bring in a bill for carrying the plan into effect.—He had recourse, at the same time, to another auxiliary measure, which had been adopted in former wars, for procuring men, by bringing in a bill to enable magistrates to apprehend all idle and disorderly persons, who might be able to serve his Majesty, and who could give no satisfactory account of their means of procuring a subsistence.

A conversation, rather than a debate, ensued on this developement of Mr. Pitt's plan, which was truly represented as a strong measure, which nothing but necessity could justify. No objection, of any consequence, was started;—but Mr. Harrison, whose mind appears to have been so intent on his notable scheme for the

taxation of placemen and pensioners, that he could not discuss any subject, however foreign from it, without an effort, at least, to render it applicable, now seriously proposed, that every person, holding a place or pension of £300 a year, should provide one seaman, or two landsmen, for the service of the navy;—persons possessing £400 a year, two seamen or three landsmen;—persons holding £500 a year, two seamen or four landsmen;—and for every £100 above £500, to whatever extent of sum, that one man should be added;—why persons who, it was fair to presume, were only rewarded in proportion to the services which they rendered to the public, should be thus selected, as particular objects of taxation, this wise legislator did not condescend to explain. Nor does he seem to have been aware, even, that the very ground on which the owners of ships were called upon to contribute to the naval service, in this peculiar way, was, the necessity under which their vessels lay for the protection of our naval force;—if Mr. Harrison could have proved, that persons enjoying rewards for public services stood in frequent need of *convoy*, he might have rendered his proposal as relevant and proper, as it was irrelevant, ridiculous, and unjust. It would have occurred, to any man of plain, common sense, that the effect of adopt-

ing Mr. Harrison's proposal, for rendering persons, holding places, liable not only to contributions, in common with their fellow-subjects, but to additional taxes paid by no other description of persons, would be to diminish the amount of their salaries; a measure which could only be justifiable on the admission that those salaries were too great for the services which they were established to reward. The only just and honourable mode of acting, then, for a legislator, under such circumstances, was to bring the question, immediately, and in a direct way, before the House; when its merits might be fairly discussed;—and if, upon due investigation, it had been found, that the salaries were too high, the House should have addressed the King, and requested him to reduce them to a proper standard. But it was very well known, that such an enquiry would lead to a very different result; and, therefore, this indirect mode of attack, upon persons holding public situations, was preferred as best calculated to answer the purposes of faction, by rendering them odious to the undiscerning multitude; and to prevent the question from being brought before the public, in the only way in which its real merits could be investigated, and the truth made apparent. In respect of pensioners, it was also studiously concealed, that

they were already subject to a particular tax of four shillings in the pound, on the amount of their pensions, in addition to all other taxes.*

The Minister, having, at length, brought his negotiation with Austria, respecting the means for the vigorous prosecution of the war, to a state of great forwardness, delivered a message to the House, on the fourth of February, from his Majesty, who informed the Commons, that the Emperor was inclined to make the most vigorous exertions for the common cause, in the following campaign; but that, to enable him to carry his plans into effect, it would be necessary for his Imperial Majesty to raise four millions by way of loan, on the credit of his hereditary dominions; and this was pro-

* Nothing can be more absurd than this mode of diminishing the amount of pensions, granted for public services; for, as matters now stand, when a pension list of 20,000*l.* is held forth to the people, they naturally think that the whole amount of that sum is taken out of the public purse; whereas, in fact, only 16,000*l.* is paid. From this practice of granting *nominal* incomes no one advantage is derived, and for it, no one valid reason can be assigned. While it is a deception on the person receiving a pension, it is of no benefit whatever to the public. If the government think a man entitled to a given sum for his services, let him receive that sum, subject only to such taxes as the same income derived from any other source would be subject to;—let him not have 500*l.* a year *nominally*, and only 400*l.* a year in *fact*.

posed to be done, under the guarantee of his Majesty, with the concurrence of Parliament. With such pecuniary aid, it was stated that the Emperor would be enabled to bring into the field an army of two hundred thousand effective men. The King was of opinion that such an arrangement would prove highly beneficial to the common cause; but he thought that the advantages to be derived from it would be greatly extended, if the Emperor were allowed to raise a still larger sum, and so to employ a more considerable force; and the British Minister, at Vienna, had been instructed to inform the Emperor, that his Majesty was prepared to recommend such an extension to his Parliament.

This message was taken into consideration by the House on the following day, when Mr. Pitt entered into a justification of the measure now recommended to Parliament; in the course of which he took a cursory view of the present state of Europe, and of the various opinions entertained at home, on the subject of peace; whence he inferred the policy and the wisdom of affording every facility to the Emperor,---whether with a view to the successful prosecution of the war, or in contemplation of that state of things which would justify its termination. He finally moved a resolution, expressive

of the concurrence of the House in the sentiments expressed by his Majesty; and containing an assurance of their readiness to co-operate with his Majesty, in guaranteeing a still larger loan to the Emperor, should such a step be thought advisable and practicable by that Sovereign; convinced, as they were, that it would be essentially conducive to the immediate interests of his Majesty's subjects, at this conjuncture, and to the great object of re-establishing, on a secure and permanent foundation, the peace and tranquillity of these kingdoms, and of Europe. The motion was opposed by Mr. Fox, but his eloquence was exerted in vain, since it procured only fifty-eight votes to resist the opinions of one hundred and seventy-three.

Some petitions for peace, which are never difficult to obtain, for no arguments are necessary to persuade the multitude, that the fewer taxes there are the more they will have to spend, having been procured, and laid on the table of the House, Mr. Grey, on the sixth of February, again laboured to persuade the House to adopt an abstract declaration of the perfect competency of the government at this time existing in France, to entertain and conclude a negotiation for peace with Great Britain. Not one new reason was, or, indeed, could be, adduced,

in support of this long contested point. The Minister had before specifically declared, and he now repeated the declaration, that no sort of government in France would preclude negotiation, if that negotiation could afford a prospect of a secure and permanent peace. Sixty members voted with Mr. Grey; and one hundred and ninety for the previous question. It is as impossible not to admire the unwearied perseverance of the Opposition, in their labours on this subject, as it is to deny, that the only tendency of such repeated motions was to discourage the people of this country, and to give fresh spirits to the French. A few days after this, a similar discussion took place in the House of Peers, on a motion of the Duke of Bedford, the same in import to that of Mr. Grey, but worded with more caution. It was resisted on the same grounds as those on which the resistance to other motions of the same nature had been founded, and twelve Peers only divided in favour of it.

When Mr. Pitt opened the budget, (on the 22d of February) it appeared, that the aggregate sum, requisite for the service of the year, amounted to £27,540,584. 3s. 3½d.; to supply which, an issue of exchequer bills, to the amount of three millions and a half, and a loan of eighteen millions, were requisite. In

order to defray the interest of the loan, Mr. Pitt proposed to raise, by an additional duty of twenty pounds per ton upon wine, half a million; by an additional duty on spirits, of eight-pence on every gallon of rum; of ten-pence on the same quantity of brandy; and of one penny per gallon on British spirits; two hundred and fifty-nine thousand pounds; by a duty on different articles of customs, such as raisins, oranges, lemons, &c. one hundred and eighty-seven thousand pounds; by an additional duty on stamps, sixty-eight thousand pounds,—by a restriction of the privilege of franking letters, forty thousand pounds;—by a guinea licence to wear hair-powder, two hundred and ten thousand pounds;—by an additional duty of seven and a half per cent. on tea, and an additional duty on coffee and cocoa, two hundred and twenty thousand pounds;—by a tax on the insurance of ships and cargoes, and of lives, one hundred and sixty thousand pounds; forming a total of one million six hundred and forty thousand pounds. Mr. Pitt gave a very flattering account of the prosperous state of the revenue and commerce of the country, and entered into some details to prove the truth of his statement. All the resolutions which he proposed were adopted by the House, few

objections were made to the different taxes proposed; and the necessary bills for giving them a legal sanction were afterwards brought in, and passed through their various stages, with little opposition. The bills for manning the navy also received the sanction of the Legislature.

The Opposition, highly dissatisfied with the confidence which the House of Commons still reposed in the Minister, omitted no opportunity for endeavouring to convince them of their error; and, in order to open a vast field for animadversion and censure, Mr. Fox, on the 24th of March, made a comprehensive motion for the House to resolve itself into a committee for inquiring into the state of the nation. One reason, among many, which he assigned for recommending this inquiry to the House was, the evident change which (from the conduct of Mr. Wilberforce and his friends) he chose to believe had taken place in the minds of the public, respecting the war. Assuming this change as a fact, he plainly told the House, that if they continued to repose a blind and implicit confidence in Ministers, and only shewed themselves desirous of imposing burdens on the people, and of supporting measures which would render new burdens necessary, not only *without driving Minis-*

*ters into negotiation,** or even compelling them to account for the millions of money, and oceans of blood, which they had squandered, but even resisting a motion to enquire into the use which they had made of the confidence which they enjoyed, they must give a decided advantage to all the persons in the country who were desirous of spreading the dissatisfaction they felt themselves, and would prove the truth of their assertion, that the House was, in reality, lost to all the functions for which it was designed. He further insisted, that no man could maintain that the constitution was good, if the House refused to entertain the inquiry which he proposed.—He asserted that the population of the country had not increased, and that it was unable to repair the loss of blood which we had already suffered by the war. Our resources were represented as defective; and our burdens as so heavy as to admit of little increase. Mr. Fox took a comprehensive view of the war; its origin and progress; the conduct of our allies; and the disasters of the late campaign. He then adverted to the affairs of Ireland; to the catholics of which country, he admitted, he formerly saw great difficulty in giving all which they had a *right* to claim as subjects of the same

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795. P. 305

constitution, namely, equality of civil rights with every other subject.* He ascribed the present vitiated state of Ireland (as he did every other evil) solely to Ministers; praised the conduct of the Lord Lieutenant in promising Catholic Emancipation; and denied that any difference existed between the Catholics and Protestants, who, on the contrary, he asserted, were united in resisting the abuses and corruptions of government. He avowed the ultimate object of his motion to be the removal of Ministers from their places, and his only reason for not directly proposing such a measure was, that he thought inquiry should precede dismission.

The statement which had been so confidently made by Mr. Fox, in regard to Ireland, and urged as a ground for instituting the proposed inquiry, was, in Mr. Pitt's opinion, upon every principle of policy, the strongest reason to induce the House to resist it. He expressed great reluctance in urging any thing upon that subject. Independent of the delicacy attending the discussion in the English House of Commons, of points so intimately connected with the internal state of Ireland, and, consequently, more properly cognizable by the Parliament of

* Mr. Fox knew perfectly well that the Irish Papists *did* possess the same civil rights with their Protestant fellow-subjects; and that their exclusion from certain offices was an act of their own, and not an act of the government.

that kingdom, which had an independent legislature of its own, it was obvious that the greatest caution must be observed in making declarations on such points as those which had been dwelt on by Mr. Fox. It was not denied that there was much reason to regret some occurrences which had lately happened in Ireland; but it was boldly, positively, and unequivocally, asserted, by Mr. Pitt, that if those affairs should be fully investigated, it would appear to the House, and to the Kingdom, that none of the embarrassments which might happen in that country could, in any degree, be attributed to his Majesty's servants in this. Thus much justice to himself and to his colleagues extorted from Mr. Pitt, who declined to add more than one observation upon this subject—that if it were true that the sister kingdom was in a state of irritation, ferment, and uneasiness, it certainly was the strongest possible reason for not chusing such a moment for instituting the proposed inquiry.

The observations which had been made on the Roman Catholics of Ireland were truly regarded as telling them, that the bare circumstance of calling those claims in question, that the delay interposed in granting them to their utmost extent, that the hesitation to level all those distinctions which had so long been established,

and the policy of not being too precipitate in lavishing upon them new privileges in addition to those which they had so lately acquired, were to them matters of serious and intolerable grievance. What was it but to countenance discontent under pretext of lamenting it, and to produce danger by the very means which were recommended as useful for precaution? What was it but proclaiming to our enemies the embarrassment and difficulties under which we laboured at home; a sort of conduct but ill calculated to diminish their hopes of success, or to infuse into them new dispositions to peace. If the House, from the progress of the French arms in Brabant and Holland, and from the views which they discovered of enlarging their territories, in proportion to the extent of their conquests, had been only more deeply impressed with the necessity of vigorous exertion, and manly perseverance, in the contest, would they be likely to adopt a motion which, in the result, could only be productive of humiliation and disappointment? Would they proclaim to the enemy a danger with respect to themselves, which, if not proclaimed, might, in fact, have no existence? Considered in this point of view, there could be no conduct less consistent with sound policy, with the true interests of the empire, or less conducive to the termination of

that great struggle in which the country was engaged, than that proposed by the present motion. Mr. Pitt followed Mr. Fox, in a cursory manner, through the different divisions of his argument, and exposed the fallacy of his statements respecting the revenue and the population of the country.—On the subject of the war, he declined entering into any lengthened detail, as all the subjects connected with it had been so frequently discussed before. He moved the question of adjournment.

The arguments of Mr. Fox were repeated by Mr. Sheridan with some additional comments, on the alleged criminality of Ministers, and the necessity of removing them to make way for men of more abilities and integrity. While, on the other hand, many of these arguments were very ably confuted by Mr. Canning. On Mr. Fox's declaration, on the peculiar defect in the constitution of Great Britain, which was the only country, according to him, in which it would be possible for a Minister to remain in office after such repeated failures and disasters, Mr. Canning observed, that the defect, if so it must be called, grew out of the peculiar freedom of the British Constitution, and out of the share which the people took in the public affairs, and the political conduct of the government. In arbitrary governments,

where no intercourse subsisted between the Executive Power and the people, where the latter had no insight into the proceedings of the state, but were left to judge, merely from the event, how far they might have been wisely designed, or honestly conducted, it was not surprizing that they should consider every failure as a crime, and demand a victim for every disaster. But, in free and enlightened states, where the people went, as it were, hand in hand with their representatives, and their representatives with the Ministers, through every stage of a proceeding, they certainly did *not* wait for the event before they stamped it with their approbation;—and, certainly, did *not* insist upon punishing those who had the conduct of an expedition, while they could assign reasons to themselves in exculpation of a failure. The question of adjournment was carried by two hundred and nineteen votes against sixty-three.

The great questions of the object of the war, and of the expediency of premature negotiations for peace, had been so repeatedly discussed, under every form, and the opinion of Parliament upon them had been so frequently and so decidedly expressed, that it was difficult to conceive how any possible good could result from a repetition of such discussions. Mr. Wilberforce, however, thought otherwise, and, at

the latter end of May, (27th) called upon the House of Commons to record their opinion, that the present circumstances of France ought not to preclude the government of this country from entertaining proposals for a general pacification;—and that it was for the interest of Great Britain to make peace with France, provided it could be effected on *fair* terms, and in an honourable manner.

It was no discredit to the talents of Mr. Wilberforce if he offered nothing new on the subject of his motion,—because every thing that could be said in support of it had already been pressed with all the weight which superior talents could give it. No small part of his speech, indeed, was devoted to general reflections on the impolicy and cruelty of war, and on the preference to be given to peace,—abstract points about which no difference of opinion could possibly arise among Christians. He was answered by Mr. Windham, who, before he entered upon the argument, stated the necessity of knowing with *whom* he was arguing, and *how;* whether it was with any of those who, at the commencement of the war, were convinced of its necessity, and voted for it as the only means of preserving the dignity of the English character, the religion, laws, and liberties, of the nation,—the safety, honour, and security,

of the Empire; and the commerce, morals, and happiness of the people; or, whether he was arguing with one of those who approved the principles and doctrines of the French Revolutionists, who did not wish to overthrow the dangerous system of those extravagant enthusiasts; but, however strange it might appear, though nothing scarcely could be imagined strange in those days of fantastic philosophy, and pretended reformation, who had believed, and who still believed, that the establishment of the French Republic was desirable to mankind. To the latter description of persons, however, Mr. Windham forbore to direct any of his arguments, because he conceived them to be too much intoxicated with intemperance, and so completely blinded by their zeal, as to be so regardless of reason and fact, that any attempt to convince, or to convert, them would prove equally fruitless and absurd. He, therefore, confined his address solely to those, who, like Mr. Wilberforce, had originally approved the war. He then entered into a train of argument, replete with judicious and pointed observations, and marked alike by acuteness and strength. He shewed that the persons whom he addressed had not considered the state of things which would follow the conclusion of peace with France, at such a

juncture;—they had taken every thing for granted which suited their wishes; and had indulged themselves in loose and vague speculations, instead of drawing solid inferences from existing facts. Mr. Wilberforce had argued as if he thought that a treaty of peace would operate as by magic, and produce, in a moment, all the accustomed blessings which usually flow from a state of tranquillity. In the wild flights of his imagination, he did not stop to enquire whether accumulated dangers might not arise from our insecurity; nor to consider whether the lure of peace might not be held out by the enemy for the sole purpose of taking advantage of our weakness and credulity, to commit, unpunished, their premeditated acts of cruelty and revenge.

In the mind of Mr. Windham, the motion now made was neither safe nor honourable.—He accused Mr. Wilberforce of being too much addicted to speculations, and of setting up for a kind of constitution-monger.—He had lately expressed a wish to give to France the constitution of America. Mr. Windham, most successfully, ridiculed and exposed the monstrous folly of seeking to transplant constitutions like trees, without any regard to local circumstances, or to any of the causes which favour their growth, and lead them to produce good fruits.

as if constitutions could be transported from one country to another, like ready-made moveable habitations, and not, as they really are, natural to, and inseparable from, the countries for which they are specifically formed, and growing out of the affections, sentiments, and dispositions, of the people. He then expatiated largely on the present relative state of the belligerent powers, and contended, that there was nothing in the view of it which could justify the belief either that peace could be obtained if sought for, or that, if obtained, it would bring security along with it. He remarked, that the person who brought forward the motion was the friend of the Minister, upon whom he had, in the course of that evening, pronounced many eulogiums. He had expressed a firm reliance on his talents, his integrity, and judgment;—he had praised his general capacity, and he esteemed him as the most proper person for conducting the government of the country. Yet, notwithstanding all these admissions, he was not fit to conduct the business of the state, and, therefore, Mr. Wilberforce proposed to conduct it for him. He would not offer to displace his friend, but he would undertake to devise measures for him; and to assume the office of his dictator! In all public affairs men were bound to follow their

duty in preference to their friendships; and, Mr. Windham observed, that, for his own part, he had sacrificed friendships that were dear to him, to his public duty, and he did so because he loved to follow right, though it was sometimes difficult to find where it lay. Mr. Wilberforce had done so too, though the mode in which he had done it was such as not to be entitled to approbation, since, in affairs of the first importance, he had followed his own opinions. A Christian conscience was understood to be connected with humility, but Mr. Wilberforce had acted in opposition to those of whose integrity and ability he entertained no doubt, and with whom he was still bound in the close ties of friendship. He was playing a deep game; for if he were not the preserver, he was the undoer, of his country; and if he did not obtain the posthumous fame which he so virtuously desired, he would be transmitted to posterity with eternal execration.* Mr. Wilberforce was admonished to consider how far he conformed himself to the sentiments of those whose thoughts and actions he had been accustomed to oppose, or how far he adopted new opinions of his own. There were two things to confirm a man's judgment—the con-

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795. P. 345.

currence of his friends, and the dissent of his enemies. But Mr. Wilberforce had been playing a most unequal game, for he had not only the dissent of his friends, but the approbation of his opponents. He ought also to have considered, that, in every exclusive public concern, but more particularly in a war, and still more in such a war as was then waging, the executive government were possessed of a knowledge which could not possibly be possessed by others; and, therefore, he could not have such good grounds for his opinion as the Ministers had for their own.—Mr. Windham moved the order of the day.

On the other hand, Mr. Wilberforce received the thanks of Mr. Fox, who thought the oftener the subject of conciliation and peace was pressed upon the public mind the better. Mr. Pitt, however, while he gave him credit for the goodness of his motives, expressed his concern at his conduct. He contended that a radical error pervaded his whole argument, which was founded on a deception; for it went directly to the consideration of this simple question—is a peace, on fair and honourable terms, preferable to a continuance of the war?—a question on which, as had been repeatedly stated, no debate could arise, because no possible difference of opinion could subsist.

But the real question to be considered was, whether a peace, on fair and honourable terms, which is the end of all war, was more likely to be attained by negotiation, at the present moment, than by a continuance of the war?—Were they more likely to arrive at a better and more secure peace, with a reasonable prospect of permanency, by a continuance of the war, with energy and vigour, till a more favourable opening should present itself, than by the immediate adoption of some step for encouraging or inviting a negotiation? That was the question which put an end, alone, to all the declamations on the advantages of peace, which nobody would deny in this country; where the rapid effects of peace had healed wounds, infinitely greater than any which had been experienced since the commencement of the existing war, in repairing losses, more affecting the prosperity of the country than any recently sustained; — effects which, in the interval of a few years, had made us almost forget the calamities of war.

It was not the least extraordinary part of Mr. Wilberforce's conduct, that he disclaimed all wish of inducing the Ministers to make any advance, to take the first step towards a negotiation; he only professed a desire that they should be ready to *receive* overtures of peace.

But it was well observed by Mr. Pitt, that the adoption of his motion would be to take the first step, and to take it in the most exceptionable manner. That it was not an overture, on our part, to express our wish to treat, where no intimation whatever of the existence of a similar disposition in the government of France, was what no man, in his senses, would maintain. Where the overture came from the Legislature of a country, it was attended with a degree of publicity which Mr. Wilberforce had admitted to be one of the merits of our constitution. But that could not be the most convenient mode of making overtures which made known the whole terms of peace to the enemy, and left no will to Ministers to take advantage of any favourable circumstances which might occur. The Legislature, aware of the disadvantages of such a proceeding, did not usually interfere in transactions, the knowledge of the real state of which was, of necessity, confined to a few; and therefore it was that the constitution had wisely vested all negotiations for peace in the executive government. Why had this country, which was so jealous of its rights and liberties, entrusted such prerogatives to the Crown?—Why was the power of making peace, and war, and other prerogatives, which formed the excellence and the happiness of the

British Constitution, entrusted to the King?—Because it had been found, that the power of Parliament was sufficient to prevent the extension of the Royal Prerogative beyond its proper limits. It was, then, for the House to consider, whether they would step forward and assume that power of the Crown at a crisis of peculiar delicacy?

It was one of not the least strange opinions of Mr. Fox, that the French Convention, from the publicity of its proceedings, bore a nearer resemblance to the British Constitution than the constitution of any other country. Mr. Pitt expressed a hope that it was not meant to carry the comparison any farther, as if the interests of this country were to be only discussed in one popular assembly;—he hoped Mr. Fox was not so much in love with France. He thought the idea had been taken up hastily. He was not certain that it was worth while to examine, whether a despotic government, or an anarchial republic, like that of France, most nearly resembled the Constitution of Great Britain, which was removed, at an equal distance, from both extremes.

A comparative view of the expenses and resources of England and France closed Mr. Pitt's observations on the subject.—By this

it appeared, that, while Great Britain expended, in the prosecution of the war, not more than twenty-five millions per year, the expense of France amounted to ninety-seven millions per month, or three hundred and twenty-four millions per year. The inference was, that, by the prosecution of the war, we should exhaust her means, and obtain for ourselves a fair prospect of concluding, at no distant period, a safe and honourable peace. The order of the day was carried, and Mr. Wilberforce's motion rejected, by two hundred and one votes to eighty six. A similar motion was made in the House of Peers, by Lord Lauderdale, on the 5th of June, where it was negatived by fifty-three votes against eight.

The attention of Parliament was occupied, for some time, in discussions respecting the propriety and expediency of raising a loan of four millions to the Emperor, to enable him to act with vigour against the enemy. The Opposition attacked the good faith of his Imperial Majesty, as they did the character of every Ally we had; while Mr. Pitt contended, that, under the circumstances on which Europe was actually placed, it was politic, and wise, to embrace every offer of assistance against the common enemy. This opinion ultimately

prevailed, and the loan received the sanction of the Legislature.

In the Speech from the Throne, at the opening of the Sessions, a proper provision for the Prince of Wales, on his marriage, was recommended as an object deserving the attention of Parliament. It became, therefore, the duty of Mr. Pitt, as Minister, to propose such a provision; a duty which, had the proposal been confined to this object, he would have no difficulty to discharge.—But, unfortunately, it happened, that, since the payment of the Prince's debts by Parliament, in 1787, his Royal Highness had incurred debts to a very considerable amount, not less than £600,000; and it was deemed necessary to provide some means for their liquidation. The difficulty arose from the implied engagement entered into, on the part of the Prince, on the former occasion, to incur no more debts, and, consequently, to make no further application to Parliament on such a subject. The words, in the Royal Message of 1787, containing this engagement, were these: — "His Majesty could not, however, "expect, or desire, the assistance of this House, "but on *a well-grounded expectation* that the "Prince will avoid contracting any debts in "future."——"And his Majesty has the satisfaction to inform the House, that *the Prince*

" *of Wales has given his Majesty the fullest* " *assurance of his determination to confine his* " *future expenses within his income,* and has also " *settled a plan* for arranging those expenses in " the several departments, and for fixing an " order for payment under such regulations as " his Majesty trusts will effectually secure the " due execution of the Prince's intentions." That this amounted to an engagement of the nature contended for, will not admit of a doubt; and, indeed, as such it was received, at the time, not only by Parliament, but by the country at large. The only means of evading the natural conclusion to be drawn from this circumstance was, by shewing that the King contracted this engagement without the consent, or knowledge, of the Prince. — But such an evasion seemed impossible to every man in the kingdom. There was one man, however, bold enough to make the attempt. In one of the many debates which occurred, on this business, in the course of the present summer, Mr. Sheridan observed, that Alderman Newnham had considered that promise (of 1787) as not binding, because not formally delivered by the Prince himself; — this *he* could not accede to; for if he could be more bound than by a direct promise, it would be by the circumstances which attended the promise, such as it

was. Had the Prince acted under a notion that he gave no direct promise, and received the money under any idea that he could quibble away the promise which he did make, he would act in a shameless and profligate manner; he would then appear to have entered into an incomplete engagement with a view to future prevarication.* Mr. Sheridan then declared, that he would state the fact to the House, such as it really was, and leave them to draw their own inference. When it was first suggested, that a promise was to be made, he, Mr. Sheridan, had advised the Prince not to bind himself by any such obligation, without a more full knowledge of the state of his circumstances altogether, and without the assistance of a man of business who could regulate his future expenditure.—An order of payment, and arrangement, had

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795. Debate of June the 5th. P. 499.

In the course of his Speech, Mr. Sheridan stated, that he had formerly been honoured with the confidence of the Prince; but that he was perfectly disinterested, as the *Prince knew that he would not directly, nor indirectly, accept any favour whatsoever.* As wisdom, however, is derived from experience, Mr. Sheridan accepted from the Prince, at a subsequent period, the Office of Treasurer to the Duchy of Cornwall, which is understood to produce two thousand pounds a year; and which he continues to hold at the present moment.

been drawn up, and sent to his Majesty, and the Prince was then informed, from the proper quarter, that such arrangement would be sufficient; and the Prince's friends strongly advised him to abstain from any promise. How then was he astonished to find, in the Message from the Throne, that his Majesty had received the strongest assurances that no future debt would be incurred?—And when he mentioned the circumstance to the Prince, he seemed surprised, and wanted him to go down to the House the next day, and *retract the obligation*, which he refused to do.* Without inquiry into the *motives* which induced the advice here acknowledged to have been given to the Prince, it is perfectly clear that his Royal Highness would have acted more consistently in following it, than in reducing himself to the necessity of making any other application to Parliament. It was thus plainly asserted, that the Prince neither knew of the promise contained in the Message of 1787, nor acquiesced in it;—whence it would follow, of course, that the Minister had put a falsehood into the mouth of his Sovereign. To repel so foul an imputation, Mr. Secretary Dundas informed the House, *that his Majesty's Message of 1787 was read to the Prince of Wales before*

* Woodfall's Reports.---June the 5th, 1795. P. 309.

it was presented to Parliament. It was perfectly intelligible; and his Royal Highness had certainly a competent knowledge of the English language to enable him to understand its import.* Hence the fact was indisputably established, that the promise was made with the knowledge and consent of the Prince.

Under these circumstances, the Minister was reduced to considerable difficulty; he could not, consistently with his character, make a second application to Parliament, for the payment of the Prince's debts; and yet to Parliament he must apply for a suitable provision, for his Royal Highness, on his marriage. — After much consultation on the subject, it was agreed that such a provision should be proposed; but that a given portion of it should be appropriated to the payment of debts. Accordingly, on the 27th of April, a Royal Message was sent to the House, in which his Majesty expressed the deepest regret, in being under the necessity of communicating to the House, that the benefit of any settlement, then to be made, could not be effectually secured to the Prince, without providing him with the means of freeing him from incumbrances, to a large amount, to which he was actually liable. His Majesty,

* Idem: Ibid. P. 504.

however, disclaimed all idea of proposing to Parliament to make any provision for that object, otherwise than by the application of part of the income which might be settled on the Prince; and he earnestly recommended the House to consider of the propriety of thus providing for the gradual discharge of those incumbrances, by appropriating and receiving, for a given term, the revenues arising from the Duchy of Cornwall, together with a proportion of the Prince's other annual income;—and the King declared his readiness to concur in any provisions, which the wisdom of Parliament might suggest, for the purpose of establishing a regular and punctual order of payment, in the Prince's expenditure, and of guarding against the possibility of the Prince being again involved in so painful and embarrassing a situation.

This application gave rise to many debates, chiefly occasioned by the Prince's debts.—The income proposed by Mr. Pitt to be allowed to the Prince was £125,000; an income which, whether considered comparatively with the incomes of former Heirs Apparent, or positively with regard to the actual price of every article of comfort, and of luxury, was certainly not more than adequate to the support of that splendour and magnificence which it became

the Prince to display. This sum, after much discussion, was granted; — some members, however, granting it with a direct view to the existing incumbrances; and others without any such view. Indeed, no member could, consistently with his duty, after the recent Message from the Throne, and the transaction of 1787, take the debts into his contemplation in settling the amount of the Prince's provis on. It ought to have been estimated, exclusively, on the consideration of the rank which he had to support, and the unavoidable expense of supporting it. When this point was settled, it was proposed to appropriate £65,000, in addition to £13,000, the estimated produce of the Duchy of Cornwall, to the gradual liquidation of the debts. — On this proposal, much warm discussion, and great difference of opinion, even between men who usually acted and voted together, took place. Mr. Grey, and several others, considered this as a call upon Parliament to guarantee, to a certain extent, the payment of the Prince's debts, which, after what had passed in 1787, the House could not, with any regard to propriety or justice, consent to do. Mr. Pitt contended, that the sum granted was no more than was necessary to support the Prince in becoming splendour, without any reference to his debts;

at the same time he deplored the unfortunate dilemma to which the House was reduced, of either leaving the Prince in a state of embarrassment, or of adopting the proposed expedient for his relief. Mr. Sheridan chose to consider the provision as granted with express reference to the debts, and declared that the public would never believe otherwise.—He thought that the House ought deeply to consider, whether, in a war unexampled for calamity and defeat, when the people were pressed almost to the ground by the heavy accumulation of taxes, they should be further burthened by the prodigality of a Prince;—whether the House, in a spirit of equal profusion, should open the public purse to gratify the cravings and wild waste of thoughtless extravagance.* But while Mr. Sheridan contended that the House ought not to pay the Prince's debts, he insisted that the King ought to pay a portion of them, and was of opinion that the Duchy of Cornwall should be sold to defray the remainder;—although the Prince had only a life-estate on the Duchy;† and, of course, had no more right

* Idem. P. 495.

† Mr. Sheridan proposed that both the King and Queen should contribute "to gratify the cravings and wild waste of thoughtless extravagance;" and, in order to supply any deficiency

to sell it than any individual had to sell an entailed estate. Mr. Fox concurred with Mr. Pitt, in the propriety of adopting the expedient proposed for the liquidation of the debts; but, at the same time, he agreed with Mr. Sheridan, that the King should be called upon to pay a part of them.

During the discussion the idea was started, that the Prince had a right to the proceeds of the Duchy of Cornwall during his minority; and this right was boldly asserted and defended by several members. But the Attorney-General distinctly stated, that, from the time of Edward the Third to the present moment, the King had always disposed of the produce of the Duchy, before the Prince came of age, in such manner as to him seemed proper,—and his right so to do had never been contested.

that might exist after such contribution, he suggested the suitable idea of taxing persons holding sinecure offices;—that is, to diminish the incomes of individuals, who had deserved well of their country, in order to supply "the prodigality of a Prince." He would put instances in support of his proposition—"the place of Teller of the Exchequer," (held by the Marquis of Buckingham) "which produces between 18 and 20,000*l.* a year; and is thus, indeed, peculiarly circumstanced; and, unhappily for this country, that it is the more productive as the people increase; that he is rich in proportion as the people are poor."—Woodfall's Reports for 1795. June 5. p. 502.

The debates on the question were renewed in every stage of the proceeding;—and the freedom with which the conduct of the Prince of Wales, which came fairly and necessarily under the consideration of the House, was considered by some of his professed and most officious friends, as a sufficient justification for treating the King with marked disrespect. Mr. Fox, in a strange perversion of terms, and a confusion of intellect which would disgrace a school-boy, called his SOVEREIGN "*The servant of the people.*"* This was a servile imitation of the French Regicides; and a direct encouragement to all the theoretical reveries of the disaffected in England. Mr. Fox had also advanced another opinion of similar tendency—that the civil list should be granted *annually* by Parliament; thus rendering the Monarch a dependent stipendiary of the House of Commons. Mr. Dundas ably combated the preposterous doctrine of reducing the King to institute a canvas every year for his income. It was astonishing to look back but a few years, and observe what alterations had taken place.—Formerly, the Kings of England possessed a great landed revenue, which was not only sufficient to support them in all the dignity of

* Woodfall's Reports, June 5th, 1795. P. 488.

their station, but was also sufficient to enable them to do many things which modern policy had deemed prudent to place under the check of the House of Commons. Mr. Dundas truly remarked, that such new doctrines were constantly coming forth, and all tending towards one point; and their frequent appearance gave reasonable ground of alarm.* He asked, with great reason, why the King should be called upon to discharge any of those incumbrances which were entrusted, without any power on his part to prevent it. Every shilling which had been voted for an establishment to the Prince, was under his own exclusive management and direction.

The debates, on this question, cannot be read without a feeling of regret, that the members had not sufficient courage to speak their minds freely, and without reserve. Few, indeed, considered the question in a proper point of view.—While it was clear that the income voted was not more than sufficient to support a proper establishment for the Heir Apparent, it was equally clear that, with the incumbrances which he had contracted, he could not possibly support it. Lord Thurlow, Mr. Sheridan, and others, it appeared, had advised the Prince to

* Idem. Ibid. P. 504.

forego the splendour and magnificence becoming his rank and station, and to lead a life of retirement and seclusion from the world. But the persons who gave this advice seem never to have considered, that the means of supporting that splendour were not given for the purpose of gratifying the personal feelings of the Prince, but for maintaining the character and dignity of the nation.* The advice, therefore, went directly to defeat the very object for which the provision was granted. There was, indeed, only a choice of difficulties; but, without entering into a consideration of the preference of one difficulty over another, it may be safely asserted, that the only consistent mode of acting for the House, was to leave the annual produce of the Duchy of Cornwall to be assigned towards the payment of the debts, and so to tie up the £125,000, agreed to be necessary for the Prince's establishment, that no portion of it could be appropriated to any other purpose. By this means, the House would have discharged their duty, by providing for the support of that splendour which the national character required,—the only proper object of consideration to them,—without taking any cognizance of the debts which, after what had passed in 1787, they were bound to disregard.

* See Vol. II. P. 171.

A different mode of proceeding, however, was adopted.—The House, though they disclaimed all intention of subjecting the country to any new burdens for the discharge of the Prince's debts, consented so far to guarantee them, as to provide for their payment in the event of the Prince's demise before the expiration of the period (nine years) assigned for their extinction, according to the course of payment now established.—Sixty-five thousand pounds of the annual income, with thirteen thousand pounds from the receipts of the Duchy of Cornwall, making £706,000 in the whole, were set apart for this purpose.—And the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Master of the Rolls, the Master of the King's Household, and the Surveyor of the Crown-Lands, were appointed Commissioners for examining into the nature of the claims on the Prince, and for regulating the discharge of the same. The Bills necessary for enforcing these regulations were, after repeated discussions, passed into Laws.—The dower assigned to the Princess of Wales was £50,000 a year.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Harmony in the Cabinet---Appointment of Earl Fitzwilliam to the Viceroyalty of Ireland---He dismisses many faithful servants of the Crown---Motives for such Conduct assigned---His character of Mr. Beresford proved to be unjust---His hasty decisions not warranted by personal knowledge----Opposite character of Mr. Beresford by Marquis Townshend, the Marquis of Buckingham, the Earl of Westmoreland, and Lord Auckland---Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan become the chosen advisers of the Lord Lieutenant---Impropriety of such choice---Lord Fitzwilliam intends to *emancipate* the Catholics---Measures adopted for that purpose---Mr. Grattan obtains leave, from the Irish House of Commons, to bring in a bill for relieving the Catholics from all remaining restrictions---Precipitate conduct of the Lord Lieutenant---The British Cabinet disapprove it---He refuses to alter it, and is recalled---Bill of relief brought in by Mr. Grattan---Rejected by a great Majority---An Irish Member proposes to impeach Mr. Pitt---Inquiry into the cause of Lord Fitzwilliam's recall moved for, in the House of Lords, by the Duke of Norfolk---Lord Westmoreland's speech---He justifies the Government of Ireland from the aspersions cast upon it by Lord Fitzwilliam----Proves tranquillity and confidence to have existed, in an unusual degree, when his Lordship was appointed Viceroy---Vin-

dicates the characters of the persons whom he dismissed from office---Condemns the proposed emancipation of the Papists, as dangerous to the Constitution, and incompatible with the Coronation-oath---Affirms that the instructions which he had himself received from Mr. Pitt, held out no expectations of such a measure---Lord Fitzwilliam's reply---His eulogy on Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan---His character of the latter proved to be most woefully deficient in accuracy---Ridicules all fears of Catholic Emancipation---Misunderstands the question---Just ground of apprehension established by the conduct of the Irish Parliament after the Revolution---Guarded conduct of Ministers during this discussion---Generous declaration of Earl Spencer---Mr. Jekyll moves the same question in the House of Commons---Justifies Lord Fitzwilliam, and censures the Ministers---Differs from his Lordship as to the motive of his recall---Mr. Pitt's speech ---He opposes the Inquiry as unnecessary, no charge having been preferred against the late Viceroy---Mr. Douglas notices the wise and beneficent measures of Lord Westmoreland's Government---The motion for an Inquiry negatived in both Houses---Reflections on the short Administration of Lord Fitzwilliam---Alledged grounds for his dismission of the officers of the Crown examined and proved to be untenable---Sentiments imputed to Mr. Pitt shewn, by his own Letter, never to have been entertained by him---Honourable conduct of the Duke of Portland, and the other Whigs who had joined the Ministers---Mr. Barham's motion respecting the alledged misconduct of Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis---Proclamation issued by those officers oppressive and unjustifiable---Mr. Manning seconds the motion---Reads Letters, accusing the British Commanders of avarice and inhumanity---Opposed by Mr. Grey---Validity of his reasons---Mr. Dundas's speech---Moves the previous question, and proposes two

resolutions, implying approbation of the condemned Proclamation, and of the conduct of the two Commanders---These resolutions censured---Adopted by the House---The vote of Thanks opposed only by Mr. Rose, Junior---Acquittal of Mr. Hastings---Length of his Trial the source of oppression---Reflections thereon---Alterations suggested in the conduct of Impeachments---High Character of Mr. Hastings---Continental Affairs---Poland ---Tyrannical conduct of the Russian Empress---Kosciusko ---The King of Prussia makes peace with France---Lays siege to Warsaw---Is compelled to retreat---Irruption of the Russians, under Suwarrow, into Poland---Defeat of the Polish Patriots---Kosciusko take prisoner---Assault on the Capital---The suburb of Prague taken by storm---Warsaw surrenders---Dissolution of the Polish Monarchy ---Dismemberment of the Kingdom---Reflections on the unprincipled ambition of the partitioning powers---France makes peace with Spain at Basil---Acquires the Spanish part of St. Domingo---Concludes a Treaty with the Leaders of the Vendeans and Chouans---Never intended to be observed by the French Government---Disastrous expedition to Quiberon---The Emigrants defeated---Many of them taken and executed, in breach of the capitulation --- Operations on the Rhine --- Internal affairs of France---Efforts of the Terrorists---Insurrections in the Capital--- Death of Louis XVII. --- Liberation of the Princess Royal---The new Constitution---Its merits and defects --- Suppression of all popular Societies---New definition of Equality---Its absurdity shewn---Decrees for compelling the people to re-elect two-thirds of the Convention annexed to the new Constitution---Resisted by the Parisians---Battle of the 5th of October---The Conventional Troops headed by Buonaparte---The Sections of Paris by General Danican---The Parisians vanquished---

Fresh efforts of the Terrorists in the Convention---Defeated by the moderate party---Convention dissolved---Naval operations of Great Britain---Gallant conduct of Admiral Cornwallis---Admiral Hotham defeats the French in the Mediterranean---Victory gained by Lord Bridport off Port L'Orient---Capture of the Cape of Good Hope.

[1795.] Notwithstanding the secret whispers, and open insinuations, of the Opposition, tending to convey the impression, that great disagreement had existed in the Cabinet, since their late leaders had consented to become members of it, it is certain that, hitherto, a perfect agreement had prevailed respecting the great measures of policy which it was deemed proper to adopt, at this critical period of public affairs; and that there had been the most cordial and zealous co-operation amongst them for promoting the general interests, and the internal security, of the country. That a difference of opinion might, and did, exist on particular topics, is most certain; but that difference did not relate to any subject which it was necessary to bring into discussion, or to any measure which the welfare of the state required to be carried into effect. Respecting the war, its principle, and its object, the personal friends, and political connections, of Mr.

Burke, concurred in opinion with that statesman, that the restoration of the ancient Monarchy of France was its legitimate end, which ought to be openly avowed, and steadily pursued. Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, considered the restoration of the Monarchy not as the *end* of the war, but as the *means* of promoting its real end—the conclusion of an honourable, secure, and permanent peace.—This difference in principle, however, led to no difference in conduct; for while both parties were agreed on one point,—that no such peace could be concluded at present,—they both concurred in the necessity of a most vigorous prosecution of the war. Both parties, too, had viewed, with the same jealous apprehension, the progress of disaffection in this country; and, therefore, they both zealously supported those strong measures which were judged requisite to counteract it. Hence, in all the leading objects of external and internal policy, that concurrence subsisted which imparts energy to government, and gives effect to its acts.

This harmony, at all times so desirable, and never more so than at the present conjuncture, when success had increased the confidence of our foreign enemy, and the late acquittals had inspired domestic traitors with fresh hopes,

experienced some interruption in the spring of the present year, at the beginning of which Earl Fitzwilliam had been sent, as Viceroy, to Ireland. It has been shewn, that, at the period of the Regency, and immediately after the King's providential recovery, there was a party, in Ireland, who signed a *round robin*,* declaratory of their resolution to resign their offices, in the event of the dismission of any one of them. This party having refused to hold communication with the King's representative, though they continued to retain situations under the government, were, most properly, dismissed by the Marquis of Buckingham. At the head of the party was Mr.

* The deed so termed was drawn up on parchment, and the parties who signed it were said, at the time, to have confirmed the obligation, which they contracted, by an oath.--- Strange to say, this disgraceful business, which is without a parallel in the history of modern factions, was transacted at the house of one who enjoyed the offices of Provost and Secretary of State, and who had been raised, from a low situation in life, to political honour and distinction by the favour of the Crown. Such instances of ingratitude should be recorded, as *beacons* to warn public characters, and poli ical partisans, that, however a present object may be obtained by the sacrifice of principle, and by a violation of that integrity which constitutes the only surety which they can give for the discharge of their public duty, they cannot escape the scrutinizing eye of history, nor elude the honest judgment of posterity.

Ponsonby, who, with his numerous friends, immediately joined the Opposition, and opposed all the measures of he government, evidently for no other reason than that they were not in office themselves. Hence arose that spirit of discontent, and that increasing confidence among the Papists, which afterwards gave such serious alarm to the Ministers. No sooner had Lord Fitzwilliam arrived in Ireland, than he called about him the members of this very party, and dismissed many of the most faithful, and most able, servants of the Crown.—Among these was Mr. Beresford, a gentleman of an ancient family, and who had held the situation of Chief Commissioner of Revenue for five and twenty years, the duties of which he discharged to the entire satisfaction of every Viceroy who had governed Ireland during that period. The persons selected for this mark of the Vice-regal displeasure were eminently distinguished for their attachment to the Protestant religion, and for their earnest desire to cement the union between the two countries. Had not Lord Fitzwilliam published his reasons for this conduct, it would not have been easy to conjecture what they were. In his published letters, speaking of Mr. Beresford, he said: "He filled a situation greater than that of the Lord Lieutenant; and when he saw that, if he

had connected himself with him, it would have been connecting himself with a person under universal heavy suspicions, and subjecting his government to all the opprobrium and unpopularity attendant upon his mal-administration, what was then to be his choice? What the decision he had to form? He could not hesitate a moment ;—he decided, at once, not to cloud the dawn of his administration by leaving in such power and authority so much imputed malversation." That a man of Lord Fitzwilliam's character, holding the rank and station which he enjoyed, and honoured with the confidence of his Sovereign, should have ventured to make these, and other, assertions, which he advanced in justification of his conduct, is a lamentable proof of the influence which party-spirit, and disappointed ambition, will, sometimes, acquire over the most honourable minds. Had this imputed malversation of an old servant of the public really existed, it was scarcely possible for the Viceroy, without that intuitive sagacity which discovers a man's principles and conduct in his countenance, to obtain any proofs of it, before he formed his opinion, and adopted his decision.—For Lord Fitzwilliam reached Dublin on the Sunday, and, by the Wednesday following, he had resolved to dismiss Mr. Beresford. But it is the duty of the

historian to correct the misrepresentations of party; and, unfortunately for Lord Fitzwilliam's statement, it stands contradicted by the concurring testimony of four noblemen, three of whom had served the office of Lord-Lieutenant,—Marquis Townshend, the Marquis of Buckingham, and the Earl of Westmoreland,—and the fourth, Lord Auckland, had been Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant;—all of whom unanimously declared, that a man of more spotless integrity, a more upright, faithful, and able servant of the public, and a more zealous and loyal subject, did not exist.* The fact appears to be this,—that Lord Fitzwilliam having resolved to pursue a different system of policy from that pursued by his predecessors, thought the usual advisers of the government very unfit counsellors for him; he, therefore, called to his councils Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan, the very men who had grossly insulted their Sovereign, in the person of his representative, in 1789; and who had formed a faction which had systematically opposed every measure of the government; and from these advisers, no doubt, the Viceroy received the character of

* See the Speeches of these noblemen, in the debate on the recall of Earl Fitzwilliam.—Woodfall's Reports, Vol. III. p. 150—190.

Mr. Beresford, and of other respectable gentlemen, whom he chose to dismiss from their respective offices.

It was clearly Lord Fitzwilliam's fixed determination to release the Papists of Ireland from every restriction to which they still remained subject, and to place them on precisely the same footing, with regard to political rights and privileges, with the members of the established Church. Without waiting to know how far a plan, so fraught with the most serious consequences to the peace, welfare, and security of the country, was conformable with the views of the British Cabinet;—he authorized his confidential adviser, Mr. Grattan, to move, three weeks after the meeting of Parliament, for leave to bring in a bill for that purpose. Had Lord Fitzwilliam's impatience allowed him to wait only two days longer, he would have been spared the mortification, and his country the inconvenience, which resulted from his unwise and precipitate conduct.—For so soon did he receive the opinion of the British Cabinet, in disapprobation of the measure.—He did not chuse, however, to stop short in his career; but, continuing to oppose his own sentiments to those of the Cabinet, he was, most properly, recalled, and Earl Camden was appointed to succeed him. The obnoxious bill was after-

wards brought in by Mr. Grattan, but was rejected by a great majority.—One of the party, a Mr. Duguerry, seriously proposed to impeach Mr. Pitt!

By this recall, Earl Fitzwilliam chose to consider himself as disgraced; and determined to promote, if possible, a parliamentary investigation of the business. He must have known, however, that whatever communications he might deem himself at liberty to make, the Cabinet Ministers were bound to secrecy, as well by a sense of duty to the public, as by the solemn obligation of an oath. They could not, therefore, defend themselves against misrepresentation, by divulging the whole of the proceedings of the Cabinet, and without that their defence could not be complete. In the debate, which took place on the subject, in the House of Lords, on the motion for an inquiry, by the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Westmoreland entered into an analysis of the reasons alledged by Lord Fitzwilliam, in justification of his conduct. Indeed, as Lord Westmoreland had preceded him in the government of Ireland, it became necessary for him to disprove his assertions, respecting the state of oppression and corruption, which he had stated to exist in that country when he arrived there. He maintained

that as much purity prevailed in Ireland as in the government of any other country; and that no means were neglected which could contribute to the comfort and happiness of the people; and that so far from the prevalence of that universal discontent which Lord Fitzwilliam had so confidently stated to exist,—an universal degree of unanimity, confidence, and tranquillity, prevailed. His Lordship successfully ridiculed the inference drawn, by the recalled Viceroy and his friends, from the liberal grants of the Irish Parliament, which were asserted to have been voted in contemplation of the proposed measure; as if a Protestant Parliament would vote unusual supplies for the purpose of Catholic Emancipation! He vindicated the persons whom Lord Fitzwilliam had dismissed from office. In respect of Mr. Beresford, whom Lord Fitzwilliam disclaimed all intention of injuring, conceiving that he had made him ample amends by a proposed pecuniary compensation, it was justly observed that, if he deserved the character which the Viceroy had given him in his public letter, he merited punishment and not reward; and if he did not deserve it,—and no man in the kingdom deserved it less,—the pretence of atoning for the disgrace by money, was equally offensive

and absurd.* In either case the Viceroy did not discharge his duty. Lord Fitzgibbon, the Chancellor of Ireland, who had also fallen under the displeasure of the Viceroy, was truly described to be a nobleman of incorruptible integrity, who had remained true to the government at a time when Ministers were almost wholly deserted, who had, on all occasions, manifested a sincere solicitude for the unity of the Crown; and proved himself a sound lawyer, an upright judge, and a faithful counsellor. The Attorney and Solicitor-General, who had shared in the disgrace of the Chancellor, were spoken of in the highest terms, by Lord Westmoreland, who strongly censured,

* If a lucrative situation had been offered to Lord Fitzwilliam, by his Majesty's Ministers, (who certainly meant to do him no injury, to impute to him no malversation,) by way of compensation, or atonement, for his recall, it is perfectly clear that his Lordship would have rejected it with indignation and scorn. With what propriety, then, could he offer to another that which he would reject himself. The first commissioner of the revenue was a man of a noble and ancient family, and had, no doubt, feelings as acute, and a sense of honour as lofty, as the Viceroy himself.—Besides, the Golden rule of conduct,— "To do unto others as we would that others should do unto us,"—is one from the observance of which the Monarch on his Throne is no more exempted than the Peasant in his Cottage.

also, the dismission of Mr. Hamilton, *fifty years* of whose life had been spent in the service of the public!

In short, Lord Westmoreland, whose testimony was the more to be relied on, as he spoke from personal knowledge and observation, clearly proved the inaccuracy of Lord Fitzwilliam's representations on the state of the country, and that there was nothing in it which afforded the smallest justification for his conduct. The Catholics had received as many concessions as could, with prudence, be granted; they were treated with kindness,—they were contented with what they had obtained,—and did not ask for more at present.* His Lordship made some judicious remarks on the intended abolition of distinctions in Ireland, by the proposed indulgencies to the Papists. He adverted to the Act of Settlement, by which any Prince in this country, who acknowledges the supremacy of the See of Rome, and holds communion with the Pope, does, *ipso facto*, immediately forfeit his inheritance of the Crown; and from the acts of supremacy and uniformity he inferred, that the emancipation of the Papists would be construed into a holding of communion with the See of Rome. By the articles

* Woodfall's Reports for 1795, May the 8th, P. 167.

of the Union, too, the King was bound to maintain the Protestant establishment, and that was not a time to trifle with the ecclesiastical establishments of our ancestors. It was further contended, that the King could not, without a direct violation of his Coronation Oath, give his sanction to such an act. James the Second, it was well observed, had adopted a policy similar to that which had been lately proposed, and the consequences were well known. Why might not similar causes produce similar effects?

The proscription and persecution which the Papists had been stated, in the printed letter, to have sustained, since 1793, were most positively denied, as well as the hopes and expectations which were said to have been excited in their minds. Lord Westmoreland declared, that he had received no instructions, obedience to which could produce any such effect; but he had been directed to state, that the government, which was to succeed him, would be a continuance of the King's administration, whereby all jealousies and distinctions were disclaimed, and parties put entirely out of the question. Nothing, he said, could be more fair or honourable, nor could any thing else be expected of Mr. Pitt, to whose

sincerity, steadiness of attachment, and strict honour, his Lordship bore ample testimony.

The reply of Lord Fitzwilliam consisted of a most unqualified panegyric of his friends, Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan, and of his own administration. His praises, indeed, of the former of these gentlemen, were so boundless and unguarded, as almost to bear the appearance of irony. A man more universally beloved, and more deservedly so, than Mr. Grattan, he boldly affirmed, there did not exist in Ireland; and it was the peculiar fortune of that gentleman, that *his unalterable attachment to English connection,** (displayed, no doubt, in

* So strongly do the veil of prejudice, and the mist of passion, obscure the mental sight, that it is impossible for any person, not labouring under such inconvenience, to contemplate the political life of Mr. Grattan, without drawing inferences directly the reverse of those which were here drawn by Lord Fitzwilliam. Mr. Grattan's principles of reform went directly to procure the *separation* of the two countries.---His conduct in the business of the Regency had the same tendency; for he and his party, by prevailing on the Irish Parliament to elect a Regent for Ireland, notwithstanding the unrepealed Irish law, (says a contemporary writer, who was perfectly conversant with the politics of Ireland, and with the real state of the country:)---"that whoever was King or Regent of England, was, *ipso facto*, King or Regent of Ireland," presented to the British Parliament the mortifying and dangerous alternative of nominating the pretended Regent of the Irish Crown Regent of the Imperial Crown of Great Britain; (and thereby,

his conduct on the regency, as afterwards in his countenance of the United Irishmen, in

in fact, surrendering to the Irish Houses of Parliament the right of nominating a Regent of England;) or of compelling obedience, in Ireland, to the person to be nominated Regent, by the Parliament of Britain, by a British army, and a civil war, as England was under the necessity of doing to quell the usurpation of James the Second, in Ireland, after he had abdicated the Crown of England; thus cutting asunder, as far as in him lay, the only bond which bound the two countries together, and laying deep the foundation of future contention, slaughter, and civil war; for those who have assumed the right of nominating a Regent, will, on failure of issue in the Royal line, and on other contingencies, assume the right of nominating a King, or of changing the Monarchical government into a Republican; and a difference of opinion on such great Imperial questions between the two nations will be the certain parent of civil war, and, perhaps, of mutual destruction." Mr. Grattan's conduct, after Lord Fitzwilliam's recall, was remarkable for any thing but "ardent loyalty to his Sovereign."---It was not the conduct of a disappointed patriot, but that of a furious demagogue, rendered bold by the loss of place and power, or rather emancipated from the shackles which place and power had imposed, and restored to the full liberty of giving vent to the genuine sentiments of his mind. He exerted every effort to excite discontent, and to foment disturbance, by the most inflammatory harangues. In his answer to the address of a Popish Assembly, in Dublin, he plainly declared:---"My wish is, that you should be *free now*; there is no other policy which is not *low* and *little*; let us, at once, instantly *embrace*, and *greatly emancipate*." In short, there were as much inconsistency, contradiction, and tergiversation, in the public conduct of Mr. Grattan, as in that of any other popular demagogue of the day.

1798;) his unremitting pursuit of the happiness of Ireland; his *disinterested* zeal in the service of his native land, (manifested in his acceptance of fifty thousand pounds as a reward for it,) which he ever combined with *ardent loyalty to the Sovereign*, were exalted, and made more conspicuously useful, by the unrivalled talents of his mind.* His Lordship justified his dismission of the different officers of the Crown, on the ground that they did not enjoy his confidence, without, however, alledging any reason, or fact, to prove them undeserving of it.—But he did not apply his answer, or his reasoning, to any of the strong facts which had been urged by Lord Westmoreland. He treated the important subject of Catholic Emancipation with the utmost levity, and ridiculed the idea of the state being endangered by the discipline of the Church, transubstantiation, the form of kneeling, or sitting, or standing, to take the Lord's Supper.—No, no! exclaimed the Peer, these alarms are gone by, and it is, at this day, felt that there can be no danger to the state, but from political doctrines!—— If his Lordship had ever read the history of the revolution of 1688, he must have known, that the mere rites and ceremonies of the

* Woodfall's Reports, ubi supra, p. 170.

church of Rome had never formed a ground of objection to the admission of Papists to places of trust and power in the State;—and he must have known, also, that the religious tenets of that church were essentially blended with political doctrines, highly dangerous to a protestant State.* The dangers to be apprehended from the ascendancy of Papists, in such a state, are not subjects of speculative reasoning, but matters of historical fact. The proceedings of the Irish Parliament, subsequent to the revolution, when it was almost wholly composed of Papists, in repealing the very law by which the estates of Protestants were secured, afford a melancholy instance of the use which they are disposed to make of power, when once in possession of it.

* "Is it," asks the same intelligent writer, whose opinion was quoted in a former note, "consistent with the rules of either reason or civil policy, to make legislators of those who make it an article of their faith that the Supreme legislature of the State (whether monarchical or republican, it matters not) is not competent to bind them by its laws in all cases? And that they are, in conscience, bound to so active a disobedience to the laws of their country, enacted by the legislature of it, in many instances, not only of a spiritual, but a temporal nature, as to endeavour, with all their might, to obstruct and defeat the execution of them? And are such persons to be entrusted with the execution of those laws? No person, of common sense, will answer these questions in the affirmative."

The Ministers, in both Houses, confined themselves, in the examination of the question, to the simple grounds of justice and policy. They refused to enter at all into the particulars of the correspondence which had taken place between themselves and the Viceroy;—they declared, explicitly, that no blame was imputable to any of the Cabinet Ministers;* and disclaimed all intention of preferring any charge against Lord Fitzwilliam. The King had exercised his prerogative, legally and constitutionally; and Parliament were not justified, either by precedent, or by the peculiar circumstances of the case itself, in interfering in the business. The motions for the inquiry were made, as usual, the vehicles of abuse against the Ministry, and the seceders from the Opposition were exultingly told of the degradation which, it had been predicted, they must sufier, by a coalition with men, whose conduct was marked by duplicity, baseness, and profligacy; and who would sow discord, distrust, and animosity, among them.† Lord Spencer, however,

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports, May 8th, 1795. P. 175.

† See the speeches of Messrs. Jekyll, Fox, and Grey, on the 19th of May, in Woodfall's Reports.

with that manliness of conduct which is the sure token of a truly noble and generous mind, (and no man ever displayed a more marked superiority to every thing low, little, mean, or dishonourable, than this virtuous nobleman) repelled the foul insinuations, and calumnious assertions, by an explicit declaration, that, ever since his entrance into office, so far from his having reason to complain of his treatment from Ministers, he had, on all occasions, experienced the most uniform, cordial, and honourable support from his colleagues in administration.*

In the House of Commons, the business was brought forward by Mr. Jekyll, on the 19th of May, on which occasion, he solemnly professed that the public, he had always thought, had an interest in watching over the characters of public men, and in vindicating them from insinuated abuse, and unjust aspersion. Public character he regarded as public property, ever to be held sacred till it had been openly forfeited. Yet he did not scruple to indulge himself, at the expence of the first public characters in the kingdom, with a profusion of insinuated abuse and unjust aspersions;—and to launch out into a strain of personal invective, alike

* Woodfall's Reports. P. 188.

indecorous and irrelevant. But while Lord Fitzwilliam himself admitted his conduct respecting the Catholic question to have been the real cause of his recall, his officious advocate, in the House of Commons, treated this admission with contempt, and boldly stated the Catholic question to be a mere stalking-horse, assumed by Ministers for the convenience of the occasion.* A variety of other loose assertions, equally at variance with fact, were advanced, in the same quarter, during this discussion. The Catholic question was considered as a matter of trivial importance, and a confusion was made of *natural* and *political* rights, which would have disgraced the intellects of a school-boy. An awkward compliment was paid, by Mr. Fox, to the recalled Viceroy, whom forgetting, no doubt, in the heat of debate, that he was the representative of a Protestant King, he averred to be the only person who had obtained the applauses of all the Catholics and dissenters in Ireland.†

It was observed by Mr. Pitt, in adverting

* Woodfall's Reports, May 19, 1795. P. 276.

† Idem. Ibid. P. 287. Mr. Fox might have boasted, with equal truth, that he, himself, was *almost* the only person who had obtained the applauses of all the Sectaries and Republicans in England; but whether this would have been considered as a merit by the friends of the established constitution, in Church and State, seems to admit of very little doubt.

to the motion for inquiry, that, whatever the view of it might be, whether it was justice to Lord Fitzwilliam, or injustice to the Executive government—whether it was the welfare of the British empire at large, or the benefit of the Irish nation exclusively—or whether it was meant to discuss and take the opinion of the House on topics, depending before the independent legislature of the sister-kingdom; it was impossible to enter upon it at all with any effect, but by going into a complete investigation of the whole subject, without suffering themselves to be led away by garbled extracts, and vague rumours, which, however industriously circulated, certainly were not sufficient grounds for the House to form a decision upon. And whether they would agree to take a step, at once so indelicate and dangerous, as to open the secret transactions of government, and touch the vital parts of the British empire, by unnecessarily probing every little unimportant wound to the bottom, was a question which he would not insult their patriotism, or their wisdom, by doubting.

The alledged necessity of justifying Lord Fitzwilliam, Mr. Pitt contended, moved on a mere groundless assumption, that his recall, from the government of Ireland, implied a charge against him. But though Mr. Jekyll had insisted, that the removal of the servants of the crown

from their places, implied a charge, Mr. Fox, who supported him, had not contended for any such principle; and, indeed, if such were really the case, there would be an end to the position generally admitted, that the safety of the realm depended on the constitutional right of the crown to nominate and dismiss its servants at pleasure, and there would be a necessity to inquire into the cause of every dismission. Mr. Fox could not fail to see how very prolific a field of inquiry would then be opened. Mr. Jekyll had adverted to the dismission of Lord Hood; but he would be able to form a judgment of the expediency of such inquiries, and to decide more justly upon that right, when he recollected that the gallant Lord Rodney, in the most interesting and critical period of a very ruinous and exhausting war, and in the very moment of victory, was recalled by the Minister of that day, (Mr. Fox himself) without any cause assigned; and when an inquiry was called for, Mr. Fox, himself, resisted it; nay more, while he professed that he had himself advised his recall, he moved the thanks of the House to the noble Admiral. If, then, in such very extraordinary circumstances, an admiral, who was a solitary instance of successful valour, in a most calamitous war, was recalled by the very minister who moved the thanks of the House to him, was it possible

to say, that any stigma could attach to dismission without inquiry? And, with the utmost respect for Lord Fitzwilliam, Mr. Pitt conceived that there was nothing in the case of a Lord Lieutenant being dismissed, more than in the case of the dismission of a military officer, or any other servant of the Crown. Besides, he put it to the reflection of the House to determine, whether there might not be a cause for removal without a crime? Might there not exist a difference of opinion, on some case of transcendant importance, though the parties differing retained the most cordial affection for, and good opinion of, each other?

As much had been said of the corruption and oppression of the Irish Government, previous to the Viceroyalty of Lord Fitzwilliam; as both the Earl himself and his advocates, in both Houses, had made these the principal grounds of his Lordship's justification; and as the Viceroy, in his own speech, had boasted of making every abuse, and every danger, disappear in a moment; and of having converted, as it were, by magic, Chaos into order, and danger into security,* which was the

* "I touched the string, and it breathed harmony; it was not a doctrine of differences, but an animation to resist and repel the enemy, if the French had dared to attempt a landing; that enemy that came armed with fire and sword, and with principles still more poisonous and destructive than either."

grossest libel that could be uttered on all the Viceroys who had preceded him, it was deemed necessary, by Mr. Douglas, who had held a public situation in Ireland, to undeceive the House and the public. During the government of Lord Westmoreland, who immediately preceded Lord Fitzwilliam, a variety of measures were adopted, which were calculated not only to gratify the feelings, but to support the interests, of the people of Ireland. His Lordship had exercised the most rigid impartiality in the selection of persons to fill legal situations, in order to procure a due and rigid administration of justice. He had laboured to promote the independence of the legislative body, by the introduction of a bill to disqualify persons holding various offices from sitting in Parliament; and even in cases to which the disqualification was not extended, the acceptance of a place vacated the seat, and the member was sent back to his constituents to receive their judgment upon his conduct. The next grand

Lord Fitzwilliam did not appear to be aware, that his general argument justified every thing which had been asserted of the disaffection of the great body of the Papists; for it tended to prove, that they had no sense of their duty as subjects, and could only be brought to resist the enemies of the country, and to pay due allegiance to their Sovereign, by promises, and bribes,---by removing every obstacle to their full possession of political power!

object attained, during the Viceroyalty of Lord Westmoreland, was the establishment of a responsible Treasury-board, in lieu of the sinecure offices of Lord High Treasurer and Vice Treasurer. That constitutional force, the militia too, had been established by his Lordship. Hence, it was evident that the object of that administration was the reform of abuses, and not the continuance of error.—The motion for an inquiry was negatived by great majorities in both Houses.

It appears certain, from a close attention to all the known circumstances of this transaction, that Lord Fitzwilliam had laboured under some gross misconception of the views and intentions of the Cabinet. He must have misunderstood some conversation which had passed on the affairs of Ireland, for it is impossible, otherwise, that a nobleman, of his honourable mind, the integrity of which no one ever attempted to question, could have pursued that line of conduct which he began to adopt almost immediately after his arrival in Ireland. Still he thought it necessary to write for further instructions from Ministers; his letter was written on the 27th of January; but not having received an answer so soon as he expected, he chose to consider their silence as an assent to his proposed measures, and to have

the bill, for the relief of the Catholics, brought forward on the 12th of February. This precipitation, on a matter of such vast importance, was highly censurable;—it was unbecoming a statesman to draw such hasty inferences as he drew, and to act on conjecture when certainty was within his reach. On the 14th of February, he received the marked disapprobation of Ministers;—it was perfectly clear, therefore, first, that he had misunderstood them, for they never could have changed their views and designs in the short period which had elapsed since his departure from England; and if they had sanctioned his new system of policy, at that time, they would not have condemned it so soon after: and, secondly, that his Lordship did not consider his instructions as conclusive, or himself as at liberty to pursue his own plan without further communications with the Ministers.—It would be unjust to admit the supposition, if it were not fairly deducible from his own acknowledgements, that he had purposely advanced with the Papists too far to recede,—as he thought,—with safety;—for, in his reply to Ministers, he talked of the danger that would infallibly result from retracting the assent so formally given (by himself) to a motion of that importance; and he positively refused, by taking upon him that office, to be

the person to *raise a flame which nothing but the force of arms could keep down.*---Now, as Lord Westmoreland had left the country tranquil and contented, this irritation in the public mind must have been wholly occasioned by the imprudent conduct of his successor, which had such a necessary tendency to produce it, as almost to sanction the belief that it was adopted for the purpose. In another respect his Lordship's conduct was highly reprehensible. In a very few days after his arrival in Dublin, he dismissed the principal law officers of the Crown, and some others, all men of approved talents, integrity, and fidelity. Among these were Lord Fitzgibbon, Mr. Beresford, Mr. Wolfe, Mr. Toler, and Mr. Hamilton. The dismission of these trusty servants of the Crown was attempted to be justified by the assertion that they possessed not the confidence of the Viceroy; and as he meant to pursue a new system of policy, it was necessary he [illegible]ve the assistance of men of sentimen[illegible] congenial with his own; and it was further asserted, with a confidence truly astonishing, that it was a change wished for by the people of Ireland, and which must have been expected by Ministers here.* These

* Speech of Lord [illegible]ton.---Woodfall's Reports, May 19, 1795. P. 302.

honourable persons, however, enjoyed the confidence of preceding Viceroys, and of the Ministers themselves, and *deserved* that of Lord Fitzwilliam, who could not, when he dismissed them, have had the smallest grounds for dissatisfaction or mistrust; for he had had no opportunity of observing their conduct, and of ascertaining their principles; and the high estimation in which they stood with his predecessors, and with the British Ministers, was the strongest presumptive proof of their merit. This being the case, it was not possible that Ministers could have expected the dismission of these faithful servants. But, to put the matter beyond all doubt, Mr. Pitt, in a letter to Lord Fitzwilliam, expressed his strong disapprobation of the measure, adding—"That, on the subject of these arrangements, he felt himself bound to adhere to these sentiments, not only with respect to Mr. Beresford, but to the line of conduct adopted in so many instances towards the former supporters of gov , by these sentiments he must, at all even be guided, from a regard to the King's service, and to his own honour, however sincerely he might lament the consequences which must arise from the present situation." No one, who knew Mr. Pitt, could suppose, for a moment, that he would be guilty of such ingratitude,

and of such a breach of his duty, to some of the most approved servants of the Crown, as to consent to sacrifice them to the prejudices of a new colleague; or that he could be so weak as to suffer his own system of policy to be overturned, and a new and opposite system introduced, merely to please Lord Fitzwilliam! And it displayed no ordinary presumption in a new Viceroy to adopt such measures, without the clearly-expressed approbation of Mr. Pitt, and of the other Cabinet Ministers; and, at all events, it was a strange policy to conciliate the Catholics, by endeavouring to disgrace the firmest friends of the establishment. On this trying occasion, all the other seceders from the Whig Party conducted themselves with the strictest honour and propriety. They did not allow it to interrupt the harmony which prevailed in the Cabinet; nor did they suffer themselves to be betrayed, by the taunts and invectives of Opposition, into any explanations, or communications, inconsistent with their public duty; while Lord Fitzwilliam had the mortification to see his cause pleaded by the very men who had pleaded, with equal energy, in favour of those disaffected persons acquitted and condemned, those turbulent jacobins, whom his Lordship so strongly, and so virtuously, reprobated; and all of whom, be it observed,

were most anxious for that abolition of tests and distinctions which his Lordship had endeavoured to promote in Ireland, but which our wiser ancestors deemed essential for the preservation of our constitution in Church and State.

Among objects of minor importance which, during this session, occupied the attention of Parliament, was a motion, brought forward by Mr. Barham, for recalling certain proclamations, which had been issued in the island of Martinique, by the military and naval commanders, Sir Charles Grey, and Sir John Jervis. The purport of these proclamations, which were published in the spring of 1794, was to levy a general contribution on the proprietors of estates in the island; or, to use the unprecedented expression of one of the proclamations, "*to raise a sum of money adequate to the value of the conquest,*"* and, as the means of effecting this end, to obtain a specification of all property whatever in the island. And, unless this mandate were complied with, these commanders declared it was their firm resolution to avail themselves of the power, with which they were invested, *to order and enforce a general*

* See the proclamations in Woodfall's reports, June 2, 1795. P. p. 412, 413.

confiscation. This proclamation was condemned, on two grounds, first, as being contrary to the general usages of war; and, secondly, as being a breach of that promise of security to persons and property, which was publicly held forth by the British commanders, previous to the reduction of the island.* Mr. Manning, who seconded this motion, read passages from various letters, which had been transmitted from Martinique, which mentioned the inhuman and avaricious conduct of the British commanders, as having fixed a stain upon the character of the country; and spoke of the example which they had exhibited of rapacity and oppression, as being calculated, on a reverse of fortune, to produce a most dangerous retaliation on the part of the French. The motion was resisted by Mr. Grey, who defended the right of confiscation as perfectly consonant with the law of nations, and reprobated the proceeding as unnecessary, since the proclamations had been disavowed by the Secretary of State; and since, the moment it had been known to the commanders that it occasioned discontent and dissatisfaction, or had, in the smallest degree, been considered as oppressive, it had immediately been annulled.†

* Idem. Ibid. P. 417. † Idem. Ibid. P. 422.

The same motives of resistance were urged by Mr. Secretary Dundas, who moved the previous question, which he followed up with two resolutions.—First, "That the inhabitants of Martinique had not availed themselves of the terms held out to them by the proclamation dated 1st January, 1794, and there was no general rule, founded on the law of nations, respecting private property, which entitled them to the advantages therein offered, after the resistance they had given to his Majesty's forces;"—and, secondly,—"That the two proclamations of the 10th of May, 1794, never having been acted upon, could not come before the House for their decision; and that the House most cordially agree, in again expressing their thanks to Sir Charles Grey, and Sir John Jervis, in the same terms that their vote of thanks has been recorded on the journals of the House, on the 10th of May last year."

The reasons assigned by Mr. Grey, for putting a negative on the motions, were perfectly valid; because, as the proclamations had been expressly disavowed by Ministers, and annulled by the commanders who issued them, it would be a work of supererogation, to say no more of it, on the part of the House, formally to *recall* them. But the resolutions, proposed by Mr. Dundas, went much too far,—for

the first of them, if it had any effective signification, went to justify the very proclamations which the Ministers had condemned. And the last, by renewing the vote of thanks, at that particular period, might, very naturally, be supposed to apply these thanks to the very transaction in question, the discussion of which had alone given birth to the resolution.—That the proclamations, however strictly defensible by the law of nations, as applicable to the rights of conquest, were highly oppressive in their provisions, and objectionable in their principle, would not admit of a doubt, even had not the open disavowal of the government amounted to a full admission of the fact. It ill became the House, therefore, to adopt any resolutions which might be construed into a virtual approbation of them.

The original motion was supported by the West India interest; but its friends professed themselves satisfied with the public disavowal of the offensive proclamations, and the previous question was carried with only fourteen dissentient voices. The first resolution, proposed by Mr. Dundas, passed by 67 votes against 13; and, strange to say, the second, renewing the vote of thanks, (for which, it is apprehended, no precedent can be found in the annals of Parliament) was opposed only by one member,

the younger Mr. Rose, who courageously resisted all the efforts of party to render the vote unanimous. The Parliament was prorogued on the 27th of June, when the King expressed a hope, founded on the internal situation of France, that the circumstances of that country might, in their effects, hasten the return of such a state of order and regular government, as might be capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of amity and peace with other powers.

During this session, the long-protracted trial of Mr. Hastings terminated in his honourable acquittal on every charge. It is not necessary to call in question the justice or the policy of his impeachment, though very much might be, and has been, urged against both, to support a charge of *persecution*—for persecuted a man must be, whatever his alledged or real guilt, over whose head the sword of the law is suspended for the long term of *seven years!* Such lengthened trials are repugnant to the genius and spirit of British jurisprudence. The cause of such unjustifiable delay in the administration of criminal justice, whatever it be, ought to be removed. It subjects the innocent man to a punishment as severe as could be inflicted on the guilty. It keeps him, for a series of years, in a state of constraint, inac-

tivity, and suspence, and subjects him to losses of various kinds, more ruinous than any fine which the court could impose. The Commons threw the blame of the delay on the Lords, who had only devoted a few days in each session to the trial; but the Commons themselves were not wholly exempted from censure, since their managers were suffered to occupy several days in the delivery of a single speech, as if more intent on displaying their own powers of eloquence, than in promoting the ends of substantial justice.

It requires, however, a radical change in the mode of conducting impeachments, before this most grievous evil can be removed. There ought to be a limited time between the period for preferring the charges before the High Court of Parliament and the final delivery of the sentence, beyond which no trial should be protracted. At all events, no prorogation of the House of Lords ought to take place until the trial should be over. Another regulation, essential to the due administration of justice, is, that the court should be subjected to the same rules as other criminal courts,—so far as respects the delivery of their verdict,—they ought not to separate, after the defence is closed, until the verdict has been pronounced. The high character which Mr. Hastings bore; the

eminent services which he had rendered to his country; his many virtues, both public and private; all combined to render his acquittal a source of satisfaction to a great majority of the people; while it heightened the public feeling at the oppression which he had endured by the unprecedented length of his trial.

Pending these discussions in the British Parliament, the operations on the Continent were such as could not be contemplated without pain, by every friend to humanity. Poland, on the one hand, exhibited a scene of desolation and slaughter, created by the unprincipled ambition of the most atrocious despotism;—while France, on the other, displayed the triumph of a sanguinary democracy, over every principle of social order, and every effort of legitimate power. In Poland, the Empress of Russia, persisting in her plan of being effective Sovereign of the country, and of making her will the law of an independent State, instructed her ambassador, a Baron Ingelstrohm, to insult the King, and to control the proceedings of the Diet, by the presence of an armed force. Under such auspices, the unhappy Poles were compelled to repeal all those laws, and to annul all those regulations, which were the result of their deliberate reflection, and which were calculated to ensure the indepen-

dence and happiness of their country. It was not possible that a people, who knew the value of freedom, and who possessed the spirit of men, could long endure a state of such intolerable bondage, without making some effort to relieve themselves from these disgraceful shackles.

During these struggles, Kosciusko appeared on the public stage. He was a soldier of fortune; accustomed to revolutions; active, energetic, full of resources, and ardently attached to his native country. He had obtained from the Revolutionary Government of France, whither he had returned, after the unsuccessful attempt to resist the Russians, when they overthrew the Polish Constitution of 1791, a considerable sum of money, with which he hastened back to Poland, and, collecting a large body of people, early in 1794, attacked the Prussians and Austrians, in different quarters, gained many advantages over them, and restored the constitution which Catharine had suppressed. Fifteen thousand Russians were, at this time, in the capital; but having endeavoured, on the approach of Kosciusko, to make themselves masters of the arsenal, they were successfully opposed by the armed citizens, who, after a desperate engagement, drove them out of the city.—In May, 1795, the cause of

freedom appeared more likely to prosper than it had been at any period since the commencement of this unequal struggle. The Polish army amounted to nearly seventy thousand men, besides a numerous and warlike peasantry, ever ready to fly to arms, when called upon to assist their gallant countrymen.

But it did not meet the views of the neighbouring powers to suffer this state of things to continue. The King of Prussia, by a base dereliction of every principle which he advanced when he first entered into, or rather formed, the confederacy against France, had, in the most dishonourable manner, deserted the allies, and made a separate peace with the French republic,* whose armies were to be left in possession of the Prussian territory, on the left bank of the Rhine. This act was rendered more detestable by the motive which gave rise to it; for it is clear that the Prussian Monarch was induced to desist from his opposition to the regicides of France, by a desire to employ his troops against the patriots of Poland. He entered that country with a powerful army,

* This peace was signed at Basil, in Switzerland, on the 5th of April, 1795, by Baron Hardenberg, on the part of the King; and by M. Barthelemy, on the part of the French government.

laid siege to Cracow, which surrendered on the fifteenth of June, and, having collected all the Russians in the neighbourhood of Warsaw, he formed the siege of the capital, the speedy reduction of which he regarded as a matter of certainty. Kosciusko, however, strained every nerve to collect an adequate force for the frustration of this design. On the eleventh of June, he approached Warsaw, forced all the Russian posts, and established himself in an advantageous position, in front of the city.—Here his army received constant reinforcements, and he was enabled to throw up formidable intrenchments, from which he battered the Prussian camp.

By these means the Prussians, after bombarding the city without effect, at intervals, for several weeks, were, at last, reluctantly compelled to raise the siege on the fifth of September.—But the triumph of the Poles was of short duration. A powerful army of Russians now entered their country under the command of Suwarrow, the celebrated conqueror of Ismael, bore down all opposition, and, after defeating six thousand Poles, under Kosciusko, and taking their general prisoner,* advanced

* This action was fought on the tenth of October.—The Poles displayed great valour, and fought with great obstinacy; but they were at last compelled to yield to superior

against the capital itself. The city had a garrison of ten thousand men, under the Generals Madalinski and Dambrowski, who resolved to defend it to the last extremity.—The assailants, under Suwarrow, amounted to sixty thousand; the Russian General resolved to take it by assault. The conflict was sustained with desperate courage, and unshaken resolution, for eight hours, when the Russians obtained possession of the suburb of Prague, where they committed a dreadful slaughter. The city being now rendered incapable of further resistance, a proposal was made to capitulate; but the only terms which the inflexible conqueror would consent to grant, were security of life and property, forgiveness for the past, and permission to all, who did not chuse to capitulate, to leave the place. Warsaw was delivered up to the enemy on the 19th of September; and, before the close of the year, the whole country was completely subjugated.—The Polish Monarchy was dissolved; its territory divided between the three neighbouring

numbers. The Polish General, Poniatouski, who was stationed, with 4,000 men, to prevent any reinforcement from being sent to the Russians engaged with Kosciusko, neglected to perform his duty; and to that neglect, the loss of this battle, which, notwithstanding the smallness of the numbers engaged on either side, decided the fate of Poland, was ascribed.

powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austria; and its Sovereign degraded into a miserable stipendiary of the court of St. Petersburgh! In this instance, the three potentates, who had first, and most loudly, reprobated the outrageous conduct of the French Revolutionists, concurred in pursuing a similar line of conduct themselves. Without the smallest provocation, or any colourable pretext, they invaded the kingdom of an independent power, dictated laws to him in his capital, destroyed the constitution of his country, murdered his subjects for their loyalty and patriotism, and, finally, hurled him from his Throne. In their condemnation of the rebels and regicides of France, these Princes pronounced their own sentence.—An act of greater violence and injustice stains not the annals of guilty ambition. It has extorted the maledictions of the present age,—and posterity will receive it with execration and horror! The fall of the kingdom of Poland may be chiefly ascribed to the radical defects in her Constitution, which left not to the King sufficient power, nor to the people sufficient freedom. A turbulent, overbearing, and tyrannical, aristocracy domineered alike over their Sovereign and their Slaves. The intrigues, inseparable from an elective monarchy were most unfavourable to the establishment of any settled system of

government; while they invited the mere interference and encroachments of the neighbouring states. At the same time that the Polish nobles enslaved the peasantry, and fettered the Crown, they were not of sufficient strength themselves, either to prevent such encroachments, or to supply the defect of popular freedom, on the one hand, and of regal prerogative, on the other. That the state of the people was rendered worse by this dismemberment of their country is very far from certain; but even admitting their condition to have been improved, that consideration affords no excuse for the injustice of the act. It is worthy of remark, that the Revolutionary Government of France, who had formed a secret alliance with the Patriots of Poland, departed, in this instance, from their usual policy; and, in violation of their own great principle of giving liberty to all nations, who should demand it at their hands, refused to assist the only people in Europe who required their aid, in securing their freedom and independence against the attacks of unprincipled and insatiate ambition.

The rulers of the French Republic having completed the conquest of Holland, and detached the King of Prussia from the confederacy, now directed their attention to the

conclusion of a peace with Spain. The feeble government of Madrid had but ill-seconded the gallantry of the troops, and the generous spirit of the people; and, after some inadequate attempts to resist the progress of the French, who had gained a footing in the frontier provinces of Spain, the Ministers consented to open a negotiation at Basil, where a peace was concluded on the twenty-second of July, by which the Spanish part of the island of Saint Domingo, in the West Indies, was ceded to the French, in return for the restoration of all the places which they had taken from the Spaniards. Spain acknowledged the French and Batavian Republics, and France accepted her mediation in favour of Portugal, Naples, Sardinia, and Parma, whenever their respective Sovereigns should be disposed to make peace. This wise policy of diminishing the number of their enemies, without any sacrifice of their grand objects, or of their leading principles, was persisted in by the prevailing party in the French government, after the death of Robespierre, for some time; and it led them to exert every effort to pacify the Royalists in La Vendée. For this purpose, they made the most liberal offers to Charette and Comartin, the chiefs of the Vendeans and the Chouans; and, forsaking all the high and threatening language of contempt

and revenge, they, at length, consented to treat with these " leaders of banditti," as they had been so frequently styled in the Convention, on a footing of equality, and to suffer them to prescribe terms which placed the people, under their influence and protection, in a much better situation than all the other inhabitants of France. By the treaty which Charette signed, in the name, and on behalf, of the Vendeans, on the 7th of March, 1795, the Convention stipulated to advance eighty millions of livres (nearly four millions sterling) to indemnify the inhabitants of La Vendée for the losses which they had sustained from the ravages of civil war, and the wanton devastations of the conventional agents. Four millions were assigned for discharging the contracts made by the Vendean Generals. The command of two thousand men to be stationed in La Vendée, and paid by the government, was given to Charette, who was also to make out a list of such persons as were to be banished from the country. The free exercise of the Catholic worship was allowed, and permission given to purchase a church for the purpose, on condition only that it should have no bells, and that no *exterior ceremonies* should be observed. The non-juring priests were permitted to return to La Vendée, and to be

restored to their patrimonial estates, but not to their benefices; the Republican division of countries into *districts* and *municipalities* was not to extend to La Vendée; and last, though not least, this favoured country was formally exempted from the effect of the terrible law of *requisitions* for the term of five years.—The only return stipulated for these important concessions was, *the acknowledgment of the French Republic.*—Terms nearly as favourable were granted to the Chouans by a separate treaty.

But it must not be supposed that, however important the object to be attained by the pacification of La Vendée was to the Republican government, they were either sincere in their reconciliation, or meant to abide by the terms which they had granted. They knew that, by this means, they should break the very bond of the Royalist confederacy; that they should render it a matter of great difficulty to the members of it to re-collect their scattered forces, and to resume offensive operations;—and they hoped, by inspiring the chiefs with a blind confidence, either gradually to gain them over to the Republican interest, or so to put them off their guard, that they might be easily seized, whenever the government should be prepared to throw off the mask. Indeed,

the very terms of the treaty sufficed to inspire mistrust of their motives, and suspicions of their designs;—for some of them were a direct violation of existing laws; those, for instance, which related to the division of the country, and the exemption from requisitions. Indeed, it soon became apparent, that there did not exist the smallest intention, on the part of the Revolutionary government, to fulfil these stipulations. They detained the officers whom they had received as hostages, after the Vendean leaders had performed every condition imposed upon them;—and they soon after, under a false pretext, apprehended Comartin, the leader of the Chouans. The consequence of this treachery was, that the Chouans had again recourse to arms;—as they invested the town of Grandchamp, they were attacked by a superior body of Republicans, who came upon them by surprize, on the twenty-eighth of May, took several of their officers, and put them to flight.

The British Ministers were duly apprized of all these movements, and Mr. Windham, in whose department the correspondence lay, had kept up a constant communication with the French Royalists, as well in France as in other countries. It is highly probable, from the natural disposition of the human mind, to

believe every object of earnest desire easy of attainment, that the unhappy emigrants convinced Mr. Windham that the power and resources of the Royalists were much greater than they really were. It is, however, certain that had they received effectual assistance from this country two years before, had a powerful army, with abundance of arms, ammunition, and accoutrements, for their followers, been then sent to join them, a most important diversion might have been created, and, possibly, the Republic might have been shaken to its very centre. It was not now too late to assist the French Royalists; though the difficulty of affording effectual assistance was considerably increased, and though an infinitely greater force would be necessary now to enable them to make a successful stand, than would have been requisite for the same purpose, previous to the death of D'Elbée and Bonchamp. The emigrants were themselves divided as to the plan of operations best calculated to be productive of success.—While some were for limiting the attempt to those countries in which the Vendeans and Chouans had signalized their courage, and displayed their loyalty, others insisted on the necessity of a more comprehensive system, of a more extended line of action. These founded their opinion on the existence of numerous

bodies of men, attached to Monarchy, in the different provinces of Guienne, Languedoc, Provence, the Lyonnois, and Alsace; and they recommended that an expedition should be undertaken in six grand divisions,—those on the coast to be composed of English, and those on the southern frontier to consist of Austrians. This formidable attack would, it was conceived, call forth the spirit of royalty, in every quarter of the Republic, and create such a force as her rulers would not be able to subdue. The advocates for this scheme further maintained, that it would be much better to send no expedition at all, than to send one on a contracted scale, which would only serve to draw the Royalists forth to certain destruction. There could be no doubt that a plan so extensive, if it could be carried into effect, was the most wise and politic of any that could be adopted. But the situation of Austria, at this moment, deserted as she was by her Continental allies, and pressed by the immense force of France, rendered her incapable of contributing to the success of such a scheme, in the way proposed. It only remained, therefore, for consideration, whether Great Britain should, with the resources at her command, send succours to the Royalists in Brittany, and the adjacent provinces. Here, indeed, the alternative sug-

gested was worthy of the deepest attention;—and, without having recourse to the most unfair mode of judging, from the event, it appears clear, that little success could be expected from such limited assistance as a small force could afford. If twenty thousand British troops had been employed for this purpose, in addition to the force which the emigrants could muster, the expedition would have enabled the Royalists in France to shew themselves without danger; and the extent of their force, and the practicability of their plans, would thus have been fully ascertained; while a powerful diversion would have been created, highly favourable to the operations of our allies on the Rhine.

The British Cabinet, however, appeared unwilling to adopt any decisive plan of operations on the French coast, and determined to let the Royalists act for themselves, with such assistance of arms and money as England could afford. Agreeably to this decision, a small armament was prepared in the month of June.—It consisted of all the emigrant nobility, then in England; who had enlisted in their service, with more zeal than prudence, a number of French prisoners of war, who were Republicans in heart, and who only wanted an opportunity to return to their native country. The whole formed a body of about three thousand men,

who were landed on a peninsula, in the bay of Quiberon, on the southern coast of Brittany, on the 27th of June. Here they attacked a fort, defended by three thousand Republicans, which they speedily reduced; and were, in a few days, joined by a body of Chouans, who increased their numbers to twelve thousand. During this time arms were distributed among the people of the country, who were favourably disposed; and sanguine expectations were entertained of being able to raise an army capable of opposing the Republicans in the field.

Count D'Hervilly, a gallant and experienced officer, now placed himself at the head of a large body of Chouans, and made an attempt to penetrate into the country; but, on the approach of a small Republican force, his followers forsook him, in the most dastardly manner, threw down their arms, and fled. In order to confine the Royalists to the contracted space of the peninsula which they occupied, the Republicans erected three forts at the neck of it. These the Royalists resolved to attack on the night of the 15th of July.—They carried two of them; but, being excessively galled by a masked battery, on their approach to the third, they were compelled to retreat; and were indebted for their safety to the seasonable

fire from the British ships, which checked the victorious Republicans in their pursuit, and made them fly in their turn. The failure of this attempt produced dissentions among the Royalists, which were reported, with great exaggerations, no doubt, to the Republican General, Hoche, by those French prisoners who had been enlisted in England, and who now deserted. Through the treachery of these miscreants, Hoche obtained the watch-word of the Royalists, whose camp he surprised in the night of the 20th of July, and took or slew the greater part of them. The young Count de Sombreuil, however, at the head of a gallant body of emigrants, continued to make such a desperate resistance that Hoche was induced to enter into a capitulation with them, by which they were to be treated as prisoners of war, and their personal safety insured. All the stores, ammunition, and baggage, fell into the hands of the enemy. Thus ended this abortive attempt, in which some of the best blood of ancient France was shed. Sombreuil, and his gallant associates, were, by a most scandalous breach of faith, tried, condemned, and executed, as traitors. One hundred and eighty-seven Royalists, including the Bishop of Dol, and several of his clergy, who had accompanied the expedition, were murdered, in cold blood,

on this occasion. The British squadron hovered on the coast for some time; and, having failed in an attempt to take the Island of Noirmoutier, succeeded in gaining possession of Isle Dieu, which they fortified.

The alarm, however, which this expedition, all disastrous as it proved, gave to the rulers of the Republic, induced them to keep a portion of those forces which were destined to act against Germany, in the countries adjoining the coast of Brittany. This, and the immense loss of men which their dear-bought victories had occasioned, deprived their operations on the Rhine of that character of vigour and activity which they had been accustomed to bear. Of all the possessions of Austria, on the French side of the Rhine, Luxemburgh only remained. — This was invested; and, receiving no relief, it surrendered, by capitulation, on the 17th of June. Jourdan crossed the Rhine, in August, took Dusseldorf, and compelled the Austrians to retire. Pichegru, soon after, reduced Manheim, and gained a footing on the right bank of the river, so as to intercept the communication between the two Austrian armies, under the respective commands of Clerfayt and Wurmser. One strong division of the French, having pushed forwards, attacked a part of Wurmser's army, which they

defeated; but, being more intent on plunder than on improving their victory, they were attacked, in their turn, by the Austrian cavalry; and, after sustaining considerable loss, compelled to fall back upon Manheim. Clerfayt, meanwhile, having received reinforcements, advanced against Jourdan's army, which had now invested Mentz; and, falling upon its rear, put it to flight, and took the battering train destined for the siege. Jourdan was compelled to retire to Dusseldorf; and, being closely pressed by the Austrians, he suffered greatly in his retreat. After these disasters, Pichegru, having thrown ten thousand men into Manheim, re-crossed the Rhine, and repaired to the entrenched camp before Mentz, which was very soon attacked by the Austrians, with such vigour and effect, that the French were completely defeated, all their works demolished, and all their artillery taken. Clerfayt, having attained this object, and raised the siege of Mentz, effected a junction with Wurmser, and hastened to attack Jourdan, who was speedily compelled to retreat. He was followed closely by the Austrians, who again obtained possession of the Palatinate, and of the country between the Rhine and the Moselle; and were preparing to extend their conquests, when their career of victory was stopped by the timely junction of

Jourdan's army with that of Pichegru. Manheim, however, was recovered, after a short siege, and the garrison, consisting of eight thousand men, the rest having perished in the defence of the place, surrendered prisoners of war. The approach of winter put an end to the campaign, after an useless effusion of blood; and a suspension of arms, for three months, was agreed on between the hostile generals.

During these military operations, the interior of the French Republic was far from that state of tranquillity which the destruction of the system of terror had given reason to expect. That system had still its advocates, who had no other chance for distinction and profit than its revival could afford; and though they formed a contemptible minority, in point of numbers, they knew, by experience, that activity, resolution, and vigour, would often supply the defect of numerical strength. The trial and execution of the Judges and Jurors of the Tribunal of Blood, established by Robespierre, of the Public Accuser, and of several other agents and emissaries of terror, at once alarmed and enraged them; and, mustering their forces, in the factious suburb of St. Anthony, they resolved to try the effect of a measure which had often succeeded in the early stages of the revolution. They marched against

the Convention, on the twentieth of May; and, demanding bread and the constitution of 1793, they entered the hall, and loaded the members with insults, reproaches, and abuse. One of the members, Ferrand, was killed by the mob; and his head, being cut off, was stuck on a pike. Most of the others sought for safety in flight; and but few remaining, except those who favoured the views of the insurgents, four of these successfully mounted the tribune,—Durou, Goujon, Dusquesnoi, and Barbotte,—and proposed various decrees, the object of which was to repeal the laws which had been passed against the Terrorists, Robespierre, and his adherents. But the armed citizens, and a body of soldiers, having at length marched to the relief of the Convention, the insurgents deemed it prudent to decamp; and the members returning, the decrees just passed were repealed, and tranquillity was apparently restored

The same scene, however, was renewed on the following day. The Jacobins, reinforced by great numbers of the most desperate and abandoned of the populace, and provided with artillery, again assailed the Convention, who were reduced to the necessity of feigning a compliance with all their demands;—satisfied with which, they consented to disperse.—

They meditated, however, a third attack; but the Convention had now adopted the necessary precautions; and collected such a force, as to sanction, and give effect to, the tone of authority which they resolved to assume. — Thus strengthened, they declared to the insurgents, that, unless they delivered up their arms, together with the murderer of Ferrand, they should be proclaimed rebels, and treated as such. The insurgents, who had been apprized of the resolution of the armed citizens to support the Convention, had made preparations for their own defence, by closing, as well as they could, all the avenues to their head-quarters, the suburbs of Saint Anthony. But being threatened with a bombardment, the inhabitants, dreading the destruction of their houses, compelled them to surrender at discretion; for the Convention had wisely refused to listen to any conditions. This spirit of resistance had spread much wider than had been at first suspected. The Jacobins of Toulon had taken arms, and, in a conflict with their opponents, had slain a member of the Convention; but, on their march to join their confederates at Marseilles, they were overtaken by some troops of the line, who dispersed them with great slaughter. Collot D'Herbois, with Billaud Varennes, and Barrere, members of

Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety, and partners in his crimes, had been sentenced to be transported to Guiana; but the Convention, enraged at these new plots, repented of their lenity, and now resolved to inflict on them a severer punishment. Fortunately, however, for the culprits, the two first of them had sailed before the order to send them back to Paris reached the port at which they embarked. Barrere was thrown into prison; but he contrived to escape the hands of justice, and was reserved to become one of the confidential writers of Buonaparte.

The unhappy son of Louis XVI. who, since the death of his father, had remained a prisoner in the Temple, died, on the 9th of June, in the twelfth year of his age. His premature death was owing to the diabolical means used by the infamous wretches to whose care he had been entrusted, for debilitating his body, and rendering it a prey to disease. The Convention, who had consigned him to their custody, and who sanctioned the base and inhuman treatment which he experienced, were as much guilty of his murder as if they had, by a formal vote, consigned him to the scaffold. It was, probably, the general commiseration, which the fate of this poor, persecuted boy, this innocent descendant of a long line of Kings,

excited, that induced the present rulers to liberate the only remaining child of their murdered Sovereigns. A negotiation for restoring her to liberty, by exchanging the Princess Royal of France for the Commissioners arrested by Dumouriez, and for the French Ambassadors to the Porte, who had been intercepted, and seized by the Austrians, was opened in the Summer, and brought to a conclusion at the close of the year, when this virtuous and amiable Princess was conveyed to Basil, whence she proceeded to Vienna.

After the humiliation and suppression of the Jacobin Insurgents, the attention of the Convention was devoted, during the remainder of the Summer, to the formation of another new constitution.—This business was confided to a committee of eleven members,—Lanjuinais, Lareveillere - Lepaux, Thibaudeau, Boissy - D'Anglas, Le Sage, Latouche, Louvet, Berthier, Daunou, Durand, and Baudin, who completed their labours in the month of June, on the twenty-third of which month they presented the fruits of them to the Convention. This new specimen of the wonderful proficiency of French Legislators, in the difficult science of making constitutions, underwent long and serious discussions. It vested the executive power in five persons, to be nominated by the Legis-

lature, and to be called the *Directory*. They were to be forty years of age, and must have either been members of the Legislative body, or have filled some of the great offices under the government, which, however, they must have resigned a whole year, before they could become eligible. One of the Directors was to go out yearly, and another to be elected in his stead; and no one could be re-chosen till after an interval of five years. —The Legislative power was vested in two councils;—the Council of Elders, consisting of two hundred and fifty members; and the Council of Five Hundred. One-third of the members of each council were to lose their seats every year.—They might be re-elected on their first resignation; but not after, until an interval of two years had expired. The right of proposing laws was vested, exclusively, in the Council of Five Hundred; and the right of acceptance, or rejection, in the Council of Elders. The resolutions of the former, when sanctioned by the latter, became laws.—When rejected, they could not be presented again to the Council of Elders for two years. The mode prescribed for the election of Directors was this:—the Council of Five Hundred were to make out a list of ten persons for each Director, out of which the Council of Elders were to chuse one.—The Directory might invite the

Legislature to take subjects into their consideration; but could lay no plans or proposals before them, except such as related to peace or war. No treaty concluded by the Directory was valid without the ratification of the Councils, without whose consent, too, no war could be entered upon.

The people of France, who were little able to judge of the merits, or demerits, of political institutions, except by their effects, instead of analysing this new constitution, with a view to ascertain the extent of its positive excellence, contented themselves with comparing it with its immediate predecessor;—a comparison which could not fail to be advantageous to this last offspring of legislative wisdom, and to inspire a certain degree of satisfaction and content.—It promised, indeed, the freedom of worship, and the Liberty of the Press; but these advantages were conferred, in *theory*, by the first revolutionary code, though, in point of practice, they no more existed in France than in China; and there was no more security for their enjoyment in future, than there had been heretofore. It did not suit the views of the present advocates of moderation, to relax in their severity against those firm adherents to the religion and laws of their ancestors—the Emigrants.—On the contrary, by one of the

articles of the new code, it was positively declared, that in no possible case would the return of those Frenchmen be allowed, who had abandoned their country, after the fifteenth of July, 1789; and, by the assumption of a power which they did not, and could not, possess, they forbade the Legislature to make any further exceptions in favour of this unhappy and meritorious description of men.

This constitution, like those which preceded it, was prefaced with a declaration of the Rights of Man; but the definition now given, or rather attempted to be given, to the *equality* which it sanctioned, was essentially different from the signification of the same term, as defined by the former expositors of revolutionary doctrines and laws. Equality was now declared to consist in this,—"that "the law is to be the same for all, whether "it protect, or whether it punish." Now, this is no more, a definition of equality, than it is a definition of property. It is, in fact, an attribute of law; and these metaphysical philosophers, these legislative sages, who had the vanity to think themselves competent to frame laws, and a constitution, for subject millions, and have been praised for their great abilities, their promptitude of intellectual and active

powers,* had not the sense to perceive the difference between a definition of equality, and an attribute of law. They absolutely confounded equality and law; objects as distinct as any terms of different import; as a variety of ranks, and the foundation of every moral or political principle.† Though it is difficult to understand how a principle characteristic of law could be received by a whole nation as a definition of equality, it was easy to discover the intention of committing this palpable fraud, which, devised by the committee of eleven, passed current with the rest of the Convention, and with the people at large. Equality had been the ladder by which every aspiring demagogue, from the first dawn of the revolution, had reached the summit of power. As it was equally accessible to every man of unprincipled ambition, it had stimulated new competitors, who, having thus attained the object of their pursuits, passed away, in rapid succession, like the figures in a phantasmagoria. Hence the possession of power was dangerous and pre-

* See Dr. Bisset's History of the Reign of George III. Vol. VI. and Ottridge's Annual Register for 1795, passim.

† The *rise, progress, and consequences of the new opinions and principles lately introduced into France, with observations.*--- P. 164.

carious in proportion to the facility with which it was obtained. The framers of the present constitution were fully sensible of this evil; and, therefore, resolved to destroy the ladder by which they had climbed to the sovereignty, that no fresh succession of demagogues might use it for the same purpose, to their prejudice. They, therefore, banished equality from their constitution and laws. But, in order to deceive the people, and to preserve to themselves the reputation of being the friends of equality, they had introduced the *word* equality into their declaration of the Rights of Man, and had even asserted it to be one of those rights; but that equality might cease to be formidable to themselves, they made it almost synonimous with law,—a new meaning which had never been affixed to it in any language since the creation of the world!*

Another revolutionary instrument which had proved extremely efficacious in facilitating the mighty work of subverting the Throne and the Altar, and of eradicating, from the minds of the people, every religious and moral principle, and sentiment, it was now deemed expedient to throw aside. Four articles of the new Code† were devoted to the prohibition of

* Ibid. P. 165. † Art. 361, 362, 363, 364.

all popular clubs, of whatever denomination.—It was declared, that no assembly of citizens could assume the appellation of *popular society*; that no private society, for the discussion of political questions, could correspond, or be affiliated, with another; nor hold public sittings, composed of members and assistants distinguished from each other; nor impose conditions of admission and eligibility; nor exercise the right of expulsion; nor give to its members any external mark of distinction.—The people could exercise their political rights only in the primary and municipal assemblies. Any man, individually, might present petitions to the public authorities; but all *collective* petitions were forbidden, except the petitions of public bodies in matters connected with their immediate functions.—And petitioners of every description were, lastly, enjoined never to lose sight of the respect due to the constituted authorities. A singular injunction to be placed in a constitutional code; though it is not extraordinary, that it should have suggested itself to any of the members of an assembly which had found it necessary, but a few weeks before, to forbid, by a legislative decree, the use of personal invectives, and abusive language, by any of themselves, under pain of imprisonment. But it is curious to remark, that, while the members of the

British Opposition were contending that *corresponding* and *affiliated* societies were not only constitutional, but perfectly compatible with the peace and security of the kingdom, the very men who were the original projectors of such societies, who had furnished the model of them to their admiring votaries, and servile imitators in this country, warned by the dreadful experience of their destructive efficacy, and by their perfect inadequacy to the accomplishment of any one purpose of practical utility, now proclaimed to the world the danger of their existence, and their total incompatibility with social order, under any form of government.—These clubs, like equality, had been the means of advancing many of the most sanguinary revolutionists to the highest pinnacle of power; they had been the instruments by which different revolutions in the government had been effected; they had been successfully employed to excite *political* insurrections, and to fill the minds of the soldiers with revolutionary principles;—and the leading men in the present government were indebted to them for whatever portion of power they possessed, for whatever degree of consequence they enjoyed. Nothing, therefore, but the full conviction of their dangerous tendency, of the impossibility of giving any thing like consistency, or permanency, to

the new constitution, while they were allowed to exist, joined to a secret dread that they might be used as instruments for their own destruction, could have induced these men to consent to their suppression.

The novel attempt to vest the executive power in five persons, and many other regulations in this code, were little calculated to produce that union of sentiment, and that vigour of action, which are essential to good government, and, consequently, to the well-being of a state. It seems, indeed, if we suppose the committee to have been actuated by any fixed principle, that it was their leading object, in appointing a Directory, to prevent unanimity, and to encourage dissention. Their jealousy of the executive power induced them to deprive it of any thing which could impart energy to its councils, decision to its measures, or dignity to its character; while it led them to establish that independence of the legislative body, which gave it a marked superiority over the supreme power in the state, and which was, in fact, incompatible with the existence of an efficient executive power. The five directors appear to have been intended as spies on each other; and to have been deprived of the privilege of proroguing or dissolving the legislative bodies, for the purpose of leaving these

last the power of dismissing them, if they should find them adverse to their own views, or inadequate to the purposes for which they were created.

When they had completed their constitution, the Convention, disposed rather to violate a principle, than to resign their power, tacked to the new code two decrees, the object of which was to compel the people to elect two-thirds of the members of the new councils, from the deputies of the existing assembly.—These decrees being attached to the constitutional code, were supposed, by many, to form a part of it; and, as they did not feel themselves at liberty to make partial exceptions, but imagined themselves called upon to accept or reject the whole, they gave their assent to the decrees which they disapproved, rather than negative the constitution, which they had not time to examine; but which, they took for granted, must be better than the last. The Convention, meanwhile, exercised every art of intrigue to render this monstrous abuse of power palatable to the nation; and they succeeded, by their sophistry, in persuading numbers, that it would be highly dangerous to trust the safety of the State to new and inexperienced men, and thus induced the belief, that, in gratifying their private ambition, they were actuated, solely, by a desire to promote the public good.

The majority of the nation, however, decidedly condemned, both the decrees themselves, and the mode by which their acceptance was attempted to be enforced. One principal recommendation to the new constitution, which the primary assemblies, to which it was referred, had neither time to consider, nor ability to appreciate, was the power which it afforded of chusing a new legislative body, composed of men of fair character, and moderate principles, and of getting rid of a Convention, the great majority of whose members were men of infamous character; and all of whom had either participated in, or afforded their countenance and sanction to, those acts of tyranny and oppression which had destroyed all social comfort, and all personal security, and to those deeds of blood, which had thinned the population of the country, and disgraced its character for ever. The Parisians, in particular, who had been close spectators, and too often active accomplices, in these dreadful scenes, and who, tired with the distractions to which they had been so long exposed, earnestly desired the restoration of a secure and tranquil State, considered this power as of the first importance, and resolved to exercise it, in spite of the Convention. The primary assemblies of the capital met before the appointed day, and chose the

electors, by whom their members were to be chosen, agreeably to the circuitous mode of election, fixed by the constitutional code. The Convention, however, fearful lest the example of Paris might be followed throughout the Republic, sent a military force to disperse these assemblies. Hence an inveterate animosity was engendered between the Parisians and the Convention, which broke forth into mutual reproaches and complaints, not more replete with acrimony than with truth. The consciousness of having rescued the Convention from the tyranny of Robespierre, inspired the Parisians with an eager desire to punish the members for their present ingratitude, not less than for their meditated usurpation.

The Convention knew, from experience, the inefficacy of arguments, when opposed to physical strength; and, deficient as they were in the former, they resolved not to be wanting in the latter. They silently collected a body of regular troops, which they drew from the army on the frontiers; and they even descended to strengthen themselves, by releasing the imprisoned Terrorists, who, they knew, were the most decided enemies of the citizens of Paris. At this last step the Parisians were, very justly, enraged; and they concluded that it was in contemplation to renew the horrid

massacres of September—a conclusion the more natural, as Tallien, who was one of the projectors of these massacres, had now great weight in the Convention. Self-defence now justified what animosity originally dictated, and they resolved to oppose force by force. But their measures were neither planned with sufficient caution, nor executed with sufficient promptitude. Instead of trusting to themselves, and collecting their whole force, which was amply sufficient for the purpose, they relied on the forbearance of the regular troops; and as these had refused, formerly, to fire on the people, they supposed that they would be equally reluctant to oppose them now. It never entered into their head, that the French troops were traitors only to their lawful Sovereign, and faithful to all traitors. Before, then, they had assembled their forces, and prepared for action, General Menou was sent, by the Convention, at the head of their troops, on the fourth of October, to command them to lay down their arms. The Parisians replied, that they were perfectly ready so to do, provided the Terrorists did the same. Whether Menou thought this proposal reasonable or not, he returned to communicate it to his masters, who, enraged at his forbearance to enforce an unconditional compliance with their demands broke him for disobedience.

At this juncture, a man, destitute of all the feelings of humanity, and known to be as little disposed to forbearance or mercy as the most desperate leader of a ferocious banditti, happened to be at Paris; and, at the suggestion of Barras, the command of the Conventional army was given to him. This was Napoleone Buonaparte. He had, though young, already manifested a most sanguinary disposition, during the massacres of the loyal inhabitants of Toulon; and it was justly concluded, that an occupation more congenial to his soul could not be assigned him, than the destruction of the citizens of Paris, for daring to assert those rights which the New Constitution had conferred, and to resist that unprincipled usurpation of the Convention, which violated its fundamental principle. The night of the fourth of October was the time fixed, by the Parisians, for assembling the different sections of the metropolis;—and, at twelve the next day, they paraded the streets, in arms, and with drums beating.—The battle began in the vicinity of the hall in which the Convention held their sittings; and a desperate conflict ensued between the Parisians and the Terrorists, in which the latter would certainly have been overpowered, but for the effective assistance of the troops of the line, who, to

the surprize of the Parisians, had no more objection to fire upon them, than upon the Austrians. Still, though surprised, they were not dismayed; and they maintained the fight, for a considerable time, with great courage and perseverance, against these disciplined and undisciplined Ruffians. But the omission of proper precautions, to secure the co-operation of the different sections, and to make themselves masters of the bridges, exposed them to great disadvantages, and ultimately compelled them to retreat. Still, a desultory kind of engagement was kept up during the whole of the day, and was not finished till midnight; when the Conventional troops remained masters of the field, or rather of the metropolis; and the Convention itself secured the point for which it contended, and once more triumphed over the law.

This defeat was chiefly owing to the misplaced confidence of the Parisians in the forbearance of the regular troops, which prevented them from adopting those means of offence and defence which were perfectly within their power. —But a small portion of their force was engaged; they suffered themselves to be attacked in separate bodies, instead of acting together; they were unprovided with artillery with which their opponents were amply supplied;—and they were defective in that spirit of subordination

which is essential to success in all military operations. They were commanded, on this occasion, by General Danican, an active, enterprising, brave, and intelligent officer; and had they attended to his directions, and obeyed his commands, it is highly probable that they would have triumphed over their enemies, and rendered a most essential service to their country. The loss which they sustained was never exactly known; but it certainly amounted to some thousands. This defeat was of the utmost consequence to the Convention, as numbers, who were on their march to Paris to assist the Parisians, returned home when apprized of it; and many of the provinces, which were prepared for resistance, were so much discouraged as to give up all thoughts of further opposition. The Parisians were now deprived of all their arms and warlike stores, and a military commission was appointed to try them as rebels.

The Convention gloried in their triumph; and, conscious of their power, betrayed a disposition to exercise it with their ancient rigour. —Though the time approached for their dissolution, they did not appear to have the smallest intention of resigning their seats. Indeed, it became evident, that the Jacobin faction, in the Convention, whose activity again gave them a temporary predominance, were intent on de-

vising means for perpetuating their authority; and the most serious apprehensions were entertained, that the reign of terror, and of blood, would be immediately renewed. They had appointed a commission of five members, who were to report what measures were proper to be adopted, at this crisis, in order to serve the country.—Before, however, their report was made, the more temperate members of the Convention, ashamed of being rendered passive accomplices in schemes which they condemned, resolved to prevent the execution of the intended project.—Thibaudeau, in an animated speech, exposed the profligacy of attempt to establish the permanence of the Convention; he insisted on the immediate suppression of the committee of five; and on the dissolution of the Convention on the appointed day.—He was seconded by Lareveilliere-Lepaux; and, being supported by the majority of the members, carried his point.—Accordingly, on the 26th of October, the Convention dissolved itself, and the new constitution began to take effect.

The naval operations of Britain, during this campaign, though of necessity confined to a narrow sphere, from the extreme caution of the enemy, were uniformly successful. In various actions between single ships, victory

constantly declared in favor of the British officers, who exhibited many memorable instances of skill and gallantry.—On the 13th of March, a British squadron, of fourteen sail of the line, under Admiral Hotham, fell in with a French squadron of fifteen, which was conveying a body of troops for the recapture of Corsica.—The French endeavoured to avoid an engagement, but two of their ships being separated from the rest, they made an attempt to save them, and were, by that means, brought to action. The two ships, however, the Ca-Ira, of 80 guns, and the Censeur, of 74, with two thousand troops on board, were taken by the English, while the remainder of the fleet escaped to Toulon. While Admiral Cornwallis was stationed on the west coast of France, he was met, off Belleisle, on the 16th of June, by a French force of thirteen ships of the line, to which he had only five to oppose.—He maintained, however, a running fight, during the whole of the next day, with a force so greatly superior, without suffering the enemy to gain the smallest advantage over him; and gained a British port in safety. A few days after, the French squadron fell in with Lord Bridport's fleet, off L'Orient, when an action ensued, which ended in the capture of three French ships of the line,—the Alexander, the Formi-

dable, and the Tigre. The rest of the fleet were indebted to the proximity of the land for their escape into port L'Orient. An expedition had been planned for the reduction of the important Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, which was entrusted to the command of General Clarke and Admiral Elphinstone. After a short and ineffectual defence, it surrendered to the British arms, on the 16th of September.

Thus, at the close of the present campaign, the state of affairs was, upon the whole, more favourable to the allies than otherwise.—Though none of the conquests of the last year were recovered from the French, still they had been prevented, by the Austrians, from making any further progress; and they had rather lost than gained ground. The French navy, too, had sustained further losses, while that of Great Britain was strengthened; so that, though there was nothing in the aspect of things very encouraging, there was not any thing to excite despair.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

State of the Public mind—Growth of Discontent—The source of it—End and object of the clamours for Peace—Means used for exciting dissatisfaction with the war—Scarcity of Corn falsely ascribed to it—The Press principally employed to promote disaffection—Inadequacy of exertion on the part of the Minister to counteract this effect—Cause and consequence of this inactivity—Importance of the Press, as an Engine for directing the Public mind, considered—Too much neglected by Mr. Pitt—Seditious Meetings in the neighbourhood of the Capital—Early Meeting of Parliament—Attack on the King in his way to the House of Lords—Attempt to murder his Majesty in Palace-Yard—The King again attacked on his return to Buckingham-House—These attempts traced to the adoption of French Principles—Consequent Proceedings in Parliament—Address to the King—Lord Lansdowne charges the Ministers with being the authors of the attack—Observations on that Charge—Firmness of his Majesty—Speech from the Throne—Debates on the Address—Mr. Fox's Speech—Falsehood of his assertions exposed—Amendment Moved—Opposed by Mr. Pitt—He ridicules the Amendment—Comments on the recent change of form and principles in the French Government—Regards it as competent to preserve the relations of Peace and Amity with other Nations—Lord Grenville's Bill for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government—Lord Gren-

ville's Speech — Bill for the suppression of Seditious Meetings, introduced by Mr. Pitt—He explains its principle and object—Debates on the two Bills—Opposed by Messrs. Fox, Grey, and Sheridan, who charge Ministers with having provoked the attack upon the King—Mr. Grey represents the Ministers to be Traitors—Their indecent and unparliamentary language censured—Mr. Canning's Speech—He ascribes the attack on the King to the doctrines broached at Copenhagen-House—Speech of the Attorney-General—Produces several Seditious Publications—Proves the extensive circulation of Treasonable Libels—Demonstrates the necessity of the New Bills—Bills supported by the Country Gentlemen—Speech of Sir Francis Basset—He proves the connection between the meeting at Chalk-Farm and the attack on the King—Angry reply of Mr. Fox—He asserts the design of the House of Stuart to restore Popery in England—Contrary assertion in his history of James the Second—Speech of Lord Mornington — He unfolds the views of the Seditious Societies—Quotes passages from several of their Treasonable Publications—Answer of Mr. Sheridan—He refuses to believe what it does not suit his purpose to admit—Substitutes ridicule for argument, and assertion for proof—Calls the attempt to murder the King *accidental*—His revolutionary logic exposed—His whole speech inflammatory and calculated to excite a revolt—Direct tendency of the Speeches of the Opposition to rouse the people to rebellion—Mr. Fox reduces *resistance* to a question of *prudence*—Indignant reply of Mr. Pitt—Charges Mr. Fox with setting up his own opinion as the standard of truth, and the rule of conduct for Government—Taxes him with a breach of duty, and a determination to resist the law by force—Mr. Fox re-states his position—Proved to be substantially the same—Its tendency to produce a Civil War demonstrated—Similar sentiments avowed by Mr. Grey—

Admirable Speech of Mr. Grant—The Bills justifiable only by necessity—Their Provisions—Professor Christian's opinion of them—Incidental questions arising out of the Debate—Mr. Sheridan's abuse of the Police Magistrates—Reflections on the Subject—His list of their *negative* qualities enlarged—Mr. Reeves's "thoughts on the English Government."—Denounced as a Libel by Mr. Sturt—Mr. Sheridan takes up the Question—His Speech upon it—Remarks on the novelty of his avowed attachment to the Principles of the Constitution—Ignorance of history, and puerile criticism displayed in the Debate—The Constitutional Lawyers, and Parliamentary Jesters, revile the Productions of the Reverend William Jones, the Reverend John Whitaker, and Mr. Reeves—Mr. Sheridan charges the Pamphlet with being a Libel on the Revolution—His own observations on that event shewn to be Libellous—Curious Remark of Mr. Erskine—Excellent Speech of Mr. Windham—He exposes the views of the Whigs in attacking Mr. Reeves—Analyzes the Pamphlet with great judgment and ability—Justifies the passage selected for censure—Ungenerous conduct of Mr. Pitt—Weakness of his argument—Validity of one of his positions contested—The King's power of *making laws* asserted by the Attorney-General—Absurdity of Mr. Sheridan's charge shewn—The Whigs prove themselves enemies to the Freedom of the Press, and to the Trial by Jury—Mr. Sheridan's *lenity and mercy* proved to be *tyranny and persecution*—The House pronounce the Tract to be a Libel—Address the King to direct the Attorney-General to prosecute Mr. Reeves as the author—He is tried and acquitted—Subsequent discussion of the subject through the medium of the Press—Disgraceful silence of the Whigs—Legislative measures for diminishing the consumption of Wheat—The Budget—The Loan—Message from the King on the subject of Peace—Debate upon it—Address carried without a division.

[1795.] The war, at this time, had become extremely unpopular in the country; for the greatest efforts had been exerted to persuade the people that it had no definite object; and that, therefore, it was not likely to be brought to a speedy termination.—It is, at all times, easy to convince an unthinking multitude, who act more from their feelings than their intellects, that war, *whatever* be its object or end, is an evil to be avoided; and that peace, on whatever terms and conditions, is a blessing to be courted. Indeed, when a man, with the superior talents and knowledge of Mr. Fox, did not hesitate to subscribe to a similar position, and to avow his preference for a peace, the most iniquitous, over a war, the most just, it cannot be a matter of surprize, that men, unaccustomed to reason, and unable, from education and habit, to enter into those sentiments, principles, and considerations, which lead statesmen, and others, rather to forego the enjoyment of a present good, and to bear the pressure of a temporary evil, than expose a country to the danger of permanent mischief, should be led to prefer *any peace* to *any war*. From the period of this extraordinary declaration, as if it had served as a text for the comments of disaffection, the endeavours of the members of the seditious societies, to spread discontent

through the country, had become more strenuous, and evidently more successful. *Peace* and *Reform* were the watchwords, repeated from one extremity of the Island to the other, by the emissaries of faction, who thus acquired the support of numbers unable to perceive that those who spread this clamour had ulterior views; and, instead of *peace* and *reform*, aimed at *revolt* and *revolution*.—It was a great point gained, if, by inspiring a disgust of the war, the government could be rendered odious, and the King be induced to change his Ministers, and to bring the Opposition into power. Peace was certainly desired by the factious themselves, as they felt the importance of a free and open communication with the French, which could not, by any other means, be procured; and, therefore, whether considered as a *means* for the attainment of an *end*, or as the *end* itself, it was a great object to them; and every additional advocate gained for peace was a fresh accession of strength to the friends of revolution.

If it required little ability to render the multitude hostile to any war, it required still less to persuade them of the propriety of opposing the present war. For though, had it been considered merely as a defensive war, in which we had been attacked without pro-

vocation, and in which the enemy had made no offer of reparation for her unprovoked aggression, and the injuries consequent upon it, it differed in nothing from similar wars, at former periods, and therefore afforded no grounds for a violent opposition to it; yet, all defensive as it unquestionably was, in the strictest sense of the word, it involved so many important considerations, and the discussions to which it had given rise had been extended to so many collateral objects, that it became easy to divert the minds of the people from its real origin, and to make them misapprehend its true cause, purport, and end.—For this insidious and unworthy purpose, every engine was employed. The press groaned with the weight of publications solely designed to promote it. From the brilliant talents of men in superior stations of life, to the coarsest intellects of unlettered advocates, all were employed in forwarding the same object.—During the summer, meetings had been holden in the fields in the vicinity of the metropolis; debating societies had been opened; and public lectures had been given; at which popular orators were employed to excite discontent at the war, and dissatisfaction with the government.

To the war were ascribed not only the

inconveniences which flowed from the accumulation of taxes; but even the calamities which proceeded from natural causes. A considerable failure in the crops of two successive years proved an efficient ally to these labourers in the vineyard of faction.—Corn had, in consequence, risen to an enormous price;* and this evil was imputed, exclusively, to the war, —though it is well known, that, however specious the theory, that war increases the price of corn, it stands contradicted by fact; since it has been proved, by a comparative statement of the price of wheat, at different periods of peace and war, during the last century, that corn has been generally dearer in time of peace than in time of war.†

All these efforts to excite discontent were not counteracted by adequate exertions on the other side. The press was, almost exclusively, devoted to the Jacobins. With very few exceptions, indeed, the periodical publications, daily weekly, monthly, and annual, were appropriated to the purpose of extending the dissemination of Jacobinical principles; and, notwithstanding the direful example which the French Revolution had supplied of the powerful efficacy of this engine of destruc-

* Wheat sold for fourteen shillings the bushel.

† See the Rev. J. Brand's intelligent tract on this subject.

tion, Mr. Pitt, who had high notions of the potential influence of undirected reason, when employed in the cause of truth and justice, forbore to adopt the necessary means for counteracting the effects of this wide-spreading mischief, and wholly neglected the press, as a channel for the conveyance of antidotes to the most fatal poison which ever infected the mind of man.—The impression which the constant repetition of the same complaints, and of the same story, without contradiction, will produce, may readily be conceived.—And it is as much the duty of a Minister to use all the means which his situation affords, for impeding the triumph of falsehood over truth, and for preventing an impression on the public mind, which is more easily made than removed, and which tends to produce an alienation from the person and government of the Sovereign, to loosen the bonds of subordination, and to introduce a restless and turbulent spirit, hostile to the peace and happiness of the community, as it is to provide for the immediate exigencies of the State, for its internal economy, or for its security against external attacks. It was natural for a mind, gifted, as Mr. Pitt's was, with the highest intellectual endowments, to look down with supreme contempt on the

wretched sophistry employed by the advocates for French principles;—but, when he saw these principles gaining ground in the country, the government of which was confided to his hands, and chiefly through the medium of the press, it became an essential part of his duty to employ the same instrument for checking their fatal progress. The end was lawful, as the means were justifiable. The conduct which, in the individual, might have been dignified and proper, was neither becoming nor prudent in the Minister. If a society could be formed, with sufficient funds, for establishing a complete controul over the press, so as to enable it to disseminate its own principles, throughout a country, in language adapted to every capacity, and was allowed to enjoy the privilege, without interruption, for three years, it would effect a complete revolution, religious, moral, and political, let the establishments of that country be what they might.—In England, it may be said that the laws respecting libels are of themselves sufficient to prevent the evil consequences of similar attempts.—But, besides that the assertion stands confuted by fact, it would be no difficult task so to manage the press as to accomplish the desired purpose, without incurring the penalties of those laws, all loose, undefined, and comprehensive as they

are, and inconsistent as they may be deemed by many, from the arbitrary constructions, applications, and modes of proceeding, to which they are liable, with that freedom of discussion which forms one of the most noble and most prominent features in the British Constitution; and to which many of the religious and civil advantages which Britons enjoy may be fairly imputed, and, indeed, easily traced.

The trials for high treason, at the Old Bailey, had greatly facilitated the plans of the seditious; for they were produced as examples to prove, that there was nothing illegal in the conduct of the factious societies; and that no possible danger could ensue from their proceedings, so long as *peace* and *reform* were their ostensible objects. The credulous multitude gave easy belief to representations which suited their prejudices, while they flattered their consequence. The legal distinctions which would render the delusion obvious, they had neither the wish to investigate, nor the ability to understand. They saw the plain, broad, fact before them,—that a revolutionary plan had been adopted, and, to a certain extent, acted upon; that certain leading characters in the transaction had been prosecuted, tried, and acquitted; and hence, it was no unnatural con-

clusion for their own minds to draw, even without assistance, that the law sanctioned all attempts of a similar nature. The lessons, then, which were repeated to them, at Chalk Farm, at Copenhagen House, at the various debating societies, and in newspapers, pamphlets, and hand-bills, circulated with profusion, found a ready reception in their minds, and prepared them for corresponding acts of resistance and outrage.

It was during this ferment, that the Minister deemed it expedient to assemble the Parliament at a much earlier period than usual. The 29th of October was the day fixed for its meeting; a day destined for the practical illustration of those vile principles which had been diffused with so much industry, and with such fatal success, during the summer. An immense concourse of people, much greater than had ever been witnessed on a similar occasion, had assembled in the park, through which the King was to pass, on his way to the House of Lords. As the Royal carriage moved slowly on, the mob pressed close upon it, vociferating, "*Peace!---No war!---No King!*" thus, unwarily, betraying not only the ostensible object, but the *end*, of these violent proceedings. Superadded to these leading demands, were clamours for the dismission of

Mr. Pitt, and for bread. At one period, about midway, between St. James's Palace and the gates of Carlton House, the mob had separated the royal carriage from the guards who accompanied the King; had pressed close to the door on either side; and so surrounded, almost, the horses, as nearly to impede their course. It seemed, for a short time, to be the resolution of the mob to drag the King from his carriage, and to sacrifice him to their brutal fury.—At least such was the impression made, by their movements, on the minds of those spectators who were at a little distance, and attentively observed the whole transaction. It was impossible, at this moment, not to make the disgraceful comparison between this British mob, and the French mob who stopped the unhappy Louis the Sixteenth, on his road to Saint Cloud. Every thing seemed *French* about them;—their cries, their gestures, their principles, and their actions, all plainly indicated the polluted source whence they sprang, and proved that they were not of *British* origin, or growth.* The coachman, who drove

* This idea struck me most forcibly; for I had the misfortune to be a spectator of this disgraceful scene.—I have seen many mobs in my life, but never did I behold such an assemblage of ill-looking, desperate wretches, as were collected together on the present occasion.---And, as far as the

his Majesty, was alarmed for the personal safety of his Sovereign; but, though aware of the danger to which he was exposed, he dared not urge the speed of his horses, who, being used but seldom, and accustomed to the slow pace of a state procession, would, he feared, become restive and unmanageable; so that in seeking to extricate his royal master from one peril he might possibly subject him to another. Fortunately, most fortunately, for the country, the attempt was not made to perpetrate the meditated deed, at this juncture, when it would have been physically impossible to prevent its execution.

The King reached the Horse Guards, amidst the hisses, groans, and abuse, of a rabble, who had been regularly trained to sedition and treason. The gates were then closed, so as to prevent numbers of the mob from following the royal carriage to Whitehall. —But, as it was passing through Palace Yard, the coach-window was struck with violence by something which perforated the glass, and passed with great velocity, very near to the Earl of Westmorland, who was with his Majesty.—From the shape and size of the hole

designs of men can be inferred from their looks, their language, and their gestures, the designs of this rabble, who so basely dishonoured the name and character of Englishmen, were most treasonable and murderous.

made in the glass, as well as from the great thickness of the glass itself, it was pretty evident that what had passed through it was a *bullet;* and that, as no explosion had been heard, it had been fired from an air gun; for nothing less powerful than some such instrument could have produced the effect.—Whatever it was, there cannot exist a doubt, in the mind of any rational being, that it was intended for the purpose of assasination, and that the King was its object.—It is equally certain, that it was a premeditated crime; and when considered, in connection with the insults which the King experienced in the park, and with the attack made on him, on his return, there is every reason for believing, that they all sprang from the same source, that they were all equally the result of a settled plan, and that they all had the same object in view—the murder of the King, as a preparatory step to a revolution in the country. —His Majesty pointed out the quarter whence the bullet proceeded; and where stood a dray, before a house in which no person appeared; which was the more singular as the windows of every other house on the road were filled with spectators who went to see the King pass.*

* Surmises were drawn from the known principles of the individual to whom the house in question belonged; but it would be alike foolish and unjust to found any conjectures on so precarious and uncertain a foundation.

As soon as the King had opened the Parliament, he returned by the same way to the palace.—He there dismissed his State-coach, and went, as usual, in his chariot, to Buckingham House. The park was, by this time, pretty well cleared; and the royal guards, having been dismissed, were on their way to Whitehall. A small party of the mob, having watched for the opportunity, now darted on the King's chariot, and while some of them climbed on the wheels, so as to stop its progress, others flew to the doors. At this critical conjuncture, a gentleman of the Navy Board, who happened to be near the spot, witnessed the daring attempt. His indignant loyalty prompted him to fly to the assistance of his Sovereign; but recollecting the probable inefficacy of his unassisted exertions, he prudently ran after the guards, who were yet within sight, and, providentially, brought them back just in time to prevent the ferocious rebels from dragging the King from his carriage, and from completing their diabolical purpose. Thus, to the activity and presence of mind of this loyal gentleman,* was the country, in all probability, indebted for having rescued her character from the foulest stain which the hand of a regicide could inflict, and which no

* His name was Bedingfield.

expiation, no atonement, could ever have effaced. This horrible attempt has, by no contemporary writer, been regarded with that serious attention which its importance, whether considered in itself, or with regard to the causes which gave rise to it, or to the consequences to which it led, imperatively required. On the contrary, it has been passed over lightly; the facts of the case have been imperfectly stated; and a colour has been given to the whole transaction, calculated, if not intended, to prevent that impression which, if viewed in its real light, it could not fail to produce.

In turning our eyes back on the period in which it occurred, it is as difficult to mistake the facts which marked the attempt, and the causes which gave birth to it, as it is to contemplate it without horror and dismay. For five years, the regicidal principles of the French had been industriously propagated throughout the country;—the murder of their benevolent Monarch had been hailed, by their British admirers, as a deed of transcendant patriotism, highly conducive to the establishment of universal freedom; and their example, *without any exception* as to particular deeds or occurrences, had been holden up as worthy of imitation here. It is needless to add, that hatred of Kings, and the extirpation of Monarchy,

were leading doctrines in the new revolutionary creed;—and that no objection had ever been started to them, even in that society of which the three dissenting ministers, Doctors Kippis, Towers, and Price, were distinguished members.—Indeed, the patriotic zeal of the British societies seems to have been more particularly excited, at the critical period of the deposition of Louis XVI. and by no means to have relaxed at the time of his execution.—During the whole of the present summer, as has been seen, these principles continued to be diffused with more than usual diligence and activity;—In the fields, at debating societies, in lecture rooms, in papers, pamphlets, and hand bills, Kings and kingly government had been holden up to contempt; and the advantages of a revolution, similar to that of France, enlarged upon with great emphasis, and with little disguise.—At the very first opportunity which offered, the men, whose minds had imbibed these doctrines, attack the King on his way to the Parliament House; insult him with the watch-words of the revolutionists;—call out—"*No King!*"—fire into his carriage;—attempt to drag him by force from his chariot; and, being foiled in their endeavour, vent their unsatisfied, disappointed, fury on the State-Coach, which they nearly demolished, on its return

to the mews.—Is there any thing in these proceedings which is not perfectly natural, consistent, and regular? Are not cause and consequence as plainly connected, and as clearly discernible, as in any known chain of human events? Was it not natural that men, who had imbibed a hatred for Monarchs and Monarchy, who had been taught to believe that a monarchical government was incompatible with the existence of civil liberty, and who had been led to admire, and to imitate, a people who had brought their Sovereign to the block, should attempt, at once, to gratify their hatred, and to obtain the object of their wishes and pursuits, by the only means by which it could be obtained,—the murder of their King, and the destruction of the constitution? If the personal virtues of a Sovereign could have had any influence on minds infected with the revolutionary poison, Louis XVI. had never perished by the hands of the executioner; and, therefore, the personal virtues of George the Third,—virtues which adorn the man, and dignify his station,—would operate as no impediment to the perpetration of regicide in England. That murder was intended, when all the circumstances of the case have been duly considered, it would be folly to doubt.—The consideration is dreadful; the

mind of an Englishman revolts from the contemplation of such a crime; but the attempt to commit it forms an apt illustration of principles which will ever be productive of the same effect, wherever they take root, and by whatever means they are brought to flourish.

This outrage, as might be supposed, excited great consternation in the House of Lords. As soon as the King withdrew, the Ministers had a short consultation, as to the proper mode of proceeding on so extraordinary an occasion. It was at length determined to postpone the consideration of the speech from the Throne to the following day; and immediately to form the House into a committee of privileges. This being done, Lord Grenville apprized the Peers of the attack which the King had sustained on his way to the House, from persons who, forgetting the respect and reverence due to their Sovereign, had dared to violate the privilege of Parliament, to disregard its dignity, insult its honour, and to set the laws of their country at defiance. The Earl of Westmoreland, who, as Master of the Horse, and Lord Onslow, who, as Lord of the Bedchamber in waiting, had attended the King, then stated to the House the particulars of the transaction as they had come within their knowledge. Some witnesses were next examined, who

gave an account similar to that above stated, with some additions. It was proved, that, after the Royal carriage had passed the gateway at the Horse Guards, there were frequent exclamations of "*Down with George!—No King!*" and many stones were thrown at the coach by the mob;—and it was also stated, by one of the King's footmen, that when the ball, or whatever it was, which perforated the glass, whizzed by him, he saw *a window open* in a house in the direction whence it proceeded. When all the facts had been thus established, a conference was proposed with the Commons, and a joint address was presented to the King, in which the two Houses avowed their indignation and abhorrence, at the daring outrages which had been offered to his Majesty, on his passage to and from Parliament;—declared, that they could not reflect, without the utmost concern, that there should be found, within his dominions, any persons so insensible of the happiness which all his subjects derived from his just and mild government, and of the virtues which so eminently distinguished the royal character, as to be capable of such flagitious acts;—and they expressed their earnest wishes, in which they were confident they should be joined by all descriptions of his Majesty's subjects, that he would be pleased to direct the most effectual

measures to be taken, without delay, for discovering the authors and abettors of crimes so atrocious.

The conduct of the King, during the exhibition of this disgraceful scene, was such as all who were acquainted with his Majesty's character, knew it would be,—calm, collected, and dignified.* In compliance with the wishes of the two Houses, a proclamation was immediately issued, offering a large reward for the discovery of the authors of the outrage; and also stating, that, previously to the opening of Parliament, a meeting had been holden in the vicinity of the metropolis, at which inflammatory speeches were delivered, and divers means used to sow discontent, and to excite seditious proceedings; requiring all magistrates, and other well-affected subjects, to exert themselves in preventing and suppressing all unlaw-

* His Majesty having, previously to this occurrence, signified his intention of going to the play; it was understood, that her Majesty, and most of the Princesses, alarmed at what had happened, endeavoured to dissuade the King from carrying his design into effect. His Majesty, however, resisted their importunities, and, supported by the *mens conscia recti*, with equal wisdom and fortitude, persevered in his resolution of not concealing himself from his subjects. What passed on this occasion served only to cast a fresh lustre on the royal character, and to prove his Majesty entitled equally to the esteem, the gratitude, and the confidence, of his subjects.

ful meetings, and the dissemination of seditious writings.*

* It is impossible to quit this momentous subject, without noticing one of the most extraordinary circumstances attending it. In the conversation which followed the proposal for addressing his Majesty, in the manner and terms already stated, the Marquis of Lansdowne is said to have expressed his belief, "that it was no more than a counterpart "of their (the Ministers) own plot; the alarm-bell to terrify "the people into weak compliances. He thought *it was a "scheme planned and executed by Ministers themselves*, for "the purpose of continuing their power." *Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports, October* 29, 1795. That the spirit of party will often lead men, in the heat of debate, to use expressions alike repugnant to decency, and revolting to common-sense, and to prefer charges which not only have no foundation in fact, but which those, who urge them, know to be false, is a truth, unhappily, but too well established in the political history of most civilized countries. But if ever there were an occasion, on which that spirit should have sunk and disappeared, it was this on which the House were engaged, in the contemplation and discussion of one of the most awful, interesting, and momentous concerns, which could fix the attention, and affect the feelings, of all loyal subjects. Yet, so far was it from producing its natural effect, that it seems to have increased the spirit which it ought to have extinguished; to have raised a resentment, which, mistaking its object, lost every characteristic of loyalty, virtue, and patriotism, and to have betrayed the partisan into the wildest excesses of a frenzied mind. If there were any truth in the accusation here preferred against Ministers, they must have been the basest of traitors, and the foulest of assassins; for they must have employed persons to murder their Sovereign, (and none but an idiot will deny, that

In the speech from the Throne, the King expressed his satisfaction at the improved situation of public affairs; arising from the measures which had been adopted for preventing the invasion of Italy and Germany, by the French;—the crisis brought about by the prevalence of anarchy at Paris was represented as likely to produce consequences highly important to the interests of Europe. Should that crisis terminate in any order of things compatible with the tranquillity of other countries, and affording a

the wretch, who fired a bullet into the royal carriage, did not intend to kill the King) for the purpose of preserving their power. Fortunately, the folly of the charge was alone sufficient to prove its falsehood. For it is not easy to perceive how the power of the Ministers could be preserved by the destruction of their master, to whose will and approbation they were indebted for the possession of it. On the contrary, there was good reason to believe, that the death of the King would have produced a change in the Royal Councils. But it is horrible to record such flagrant instances of moral and political depravity, in persons whose duty it is to set examples of truth, integrity, and virtue, to their inferiors. Nor could the language here quoted, receive the too frequent palliation of youthful intemperance, as it issued from the lips of one, who, deeply versed in the politics of Machiavel and Price, had passed a long life in Parliamentary conflicts; who could steadily pursue the fixed purpose of his soul, without the dread of interruption from acute feelings, or troublesome passions; and whose warmest expressions were delivered in a cold and measured tone, which plainly indicated that the heart did not always dictate what the tongue uttered.

reasonable expectation of security and permanence in any treaty which might be concluded, the appearance of a disposition to negotiate for a general peace, on just and suitable terms, would not fail to be met, by the King, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect. The speech notified the treaties of defensive alliance which had been concluded with the two Imperial Courts, and the ratification of a commercial treaty with America.

Though the declaration of his Majesty's readiness to treat for peace was highly satisfactory even to those members who thought, with Mr. Wilberforce, that peace was most desirable, still it was unable to silence the clamours of Opposition. Mr. Sheridan even deduced from it the extraordinary fact, that the prospect of peace was now more distant than ever. Both he and Mr. Fox dwelt long on the wretched state of the country, in which famine was declared to exist; while the King was surrounded "with starving, dejected, irritated, and clamourous, subjects;" —and "the poor and unhappy people of this country were governed in such a manner as to make almost every man of them feel the misfortune of scarcity and want."* Ministers

* Woodfall's Reports, October 29.

were censured by Mr. Fox, for imputing all the distresses of the French to the war, while they would not allow those of the English to proceed from the same source. He represented this statement as an absurdity too gross for argument, and which could not be credited without a surrender of the understanding.—Yet nothing was more certain, that the distresses, experienced by the people of the two countries, were imputable to totally different causes. In France, the war was the pretext for placing the whole property and population of the country at the absolute disposal of the government, who, without any regard to consequences, sacrificed every object to the execution of their revolutionary designs; and, wholly disregarding the interests of trade, commerce, manufactures, and agriculture tore the trader, the merchant, the manufacturer, and the farmer, from their respective occupations and pursuits; and thus, by diminishing the resources, while they increased the expences, of the state, and dried up the ordinary channels of supply, they produced a general distress. But in England, the distress which prevailed at this time was produced entirely by the failure of the crops in two successive years, which could not, assuredly, be imputed to the war.—In the one case, the war was the operative cause of the distress;—

in the other, it had nothing to do with it.—Nothing short, then, of a surrender of the understanding, could render a man blind to the glaring distinction. Mr. Fox concurred in opinion with Mr. Sheridan, that the speech did not "hold out to the impoverished, *oppressed*, and starving people of England, a nearer prospect of the termination of this unfortunate war." They both rejoiced in the destruction of the Bourbons;—and it was stated, that the Ministers had put an atrocious falsehood in the mouths of the emigrants, at Quiberon, who had asserted Louis XVIII. to be their lawful King. As this statement could only be founded on the alledged right of the people to dethrone and murder their Sovereign, and to disinherit his lawful heirs, it was probably considered as one of those absurdities which were too gross for argument, as no attempt was made to expose its folly and its falsehood.* After the Opposi-

* Mr. Fox, in the debate, asserted, that the offensive decree, of the 19th of November, 1792, had been formally repealed by Robespierre himself. It has been already shewn, that this was not the fact; and that even the proposal for limiting the application of its anarchical provisions to countries at war with the Republic, was scouted as unworthy even of serious discussion.---Yet it does not appear, from the parliamentary reports, that the assertion of Mr. Fox was contradicted by any of the members.

tion had exhausted every topic which could supply food for censure or condemnation;—after they had freely indulged in representations peculiarly calculated to promote the spirit of disaffection, which had just manifested itself in so plain and direct a manner;—Mr. Fox moved an amendment to the address, which had been proposed by Lord Dalkeith, asserting the ability of the French government to maintain the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other nations, and praying his Majesty to give directions to his Ministers, to offer such terms to the French Republic, as would be consistent with the honour of his Majesty's Crown, and with the security and interests of his people.

This amendment was resisted by Mr. Pitt, who considered it as containing a proposition so extraordinary in itself, that he could not believe Mr. Fox was serious in making it.—After observing the supposed state of universal degradation and disappointment, to which we had been reduced in consequence of the war, we were advised, at that moment, to sue for peace, without being informed how the negotiation was to be conducted, or what indemnity this country was to receive. The Amendment, therefore, only held out the mockery of returning to a state of security and peace.—Such

were the nature and state of the question which Mr. Fox had submitted to the House; a proposition which, according to the sacred rules of Parliament, any gentleman might bring forward *without personal responsibility*, and, of course, without incurring any threat of impeachment; though a Minister, were he to submit such a proposition to the House, without its previous sanction, would assuredly stand in a very different predicament. Mr. Pitt entered, at large, into the grounds on which the satisfaction had been expressed in the speech at the improved state of public affairs.—These, principally, consisted in the reduced means of the enemy for the prosecution of the war; and in that change in their internal state, which afforded a fairer prospect of their being soon placed in a situation to give a reasonable security for fulfilling any terms of peace which might be concluded with them. The assignats had been reduced in value, in the course of the last year, from twenty-five, or twenty, to one and a half per cent.;—that is, that a year before one hundred pounds in assignats produced twenty, or twenty-five, pounds in specie, or goods, whereas now they only produced thirty shillings. The whole amount of assignats, too, was no less than seven hundred and twenty millions sterling. While all the French rulers,

financiers, and politicians, concurred in the opinion, that it was necessary to withdraw a great number of them from circulation, and that inevitable ruin would be the consequence of their increase. Metallic pieces had been recently proposed as substitutes for assignats; but if these were to pass for more than their intrinsic value, the only difference would be, that one species of assignats were made of paper, and the other of metal. No means, however, had been yet devised for procuring a sufficiency of metal for the purpose.—A nation, destitute of gold and silver, could only obtain those precious metals in exchange for the productions of their own soil, if any remained for exportation, after the internal consumption had been supplied.—But France was deprived of this resource by the destruction of her trade, commerce, and manufactures. Mr. Pitt shewed the effect which this depreciation of assignats must have on all the operations of government, and particularly on the pay of the troops; whence he deduced the existence of those reduced means of offence which constituted a solid ground of satisfaction.

As to the second ground of satisfaction, the alledged improvement in the internal state of France, he observed, that the French now universally reprobated that system of oppres-

sion under which they had so long groaned.—They also expressed their detestation and abhorrence of that system of government which had met with such enthusiastic applause in this country. The new constitution had been ushered in with a denunciation of all the other systems of government which had been devised in the course of the revolution.—They had examined into many of them with a philosophical accuracy; and had investigated the causes of many of those unparalleled horrors from which they had derived many useful lessons. This was the only chance of convincing them that a safe and honourable peace could not be built on any of those baseless theories, which were formerly so much relished in France.—They seemed now to be satisfied that they must renounce their desperate projects, and build a system of peace on more solid and durable grounds.

Such was the change in the internal state of France, which induced Mr. Pitt to think that the period was nearer at hand, at which a secure peace might be concluded with France; and he unequivocally expressed his determination to avail himself of the first favourable opportunity which should occur for the completion of that desirable purpose. He declared that if the new constitution of France should

meet with the general acquiescence of the nation, he should consider all objections to the form of government entirely removed; and that the question, as to the security of a peace, would then depend only on the terms. But should peace be the consequence of this state of things, he frankly acknowledged that he should regret that the efforts, and resources of the principal nations of Europe, contending against a country in a temporary delirium, and exposing others to destruction, had not been more vigorously and effectually employed, for the purpose of restoring social order, exiled law, morality, and religion. But being under the necessity of submitting to these things which he could not controul, he was disposed to look with gratitude to the many favourable circumstances which then existed. If we were but true to ourselves, much might yet be done for the honour and security of the country.—Much had been done to destroy those destructive principles that had so long prevailed in France, and laid waste that fine country.—The resources of a brave and free people, living under a mild and well-regulated government, and supported by individual industry, were infinite. They had enabled us to defray the heavy expences of the war in which we were engaged, while France had been living on the

capital of the country. After the payment of our taxes, though, in some degree, burthensome, every man in this island could say, his personal safety, his personal liberty, and his private property, were secure, under the protection of the law. Mr. Pitt repelled the charges preferred against himself and his colleagues, and reprobated the inflammatory language which had been used during the discussion.—The address was carried by a great majority, there appearing, on the division, only fifty-nine votes against it. Mr. Wilberforce declared himself perfectly satisfied with it.

The first legislative measure now submitted to the cognizance of Parliament, related to a subject which was uppermost in every man's mind, at this conjuncture—the late attack on the person of the King. It was not to be supposed, that the Minister would remain satisfied with the proclamations which had been issued, offering a reward for the apprehension of the culprits, and stimulating the vigilance of the magistrates, in the suppression of seditious meetings, without the adoption of some efficacious means for the prevention of similar attempts, or for ensuring the punishment of the offenders, in case they should be made. It was with this view that a bill, "for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person and govern-

ment, against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts," was brought in by Lord Grenville, early in November. And another bill, " for the effectually preventing of seditious meetings and assemblies," was brought in by Mr. Pitt himself. These bills were acknowledged to be founded on the proclamations already issued. In introducing the first of these to the House of Lords, Lord Grenville observed, that it was notorious, that the evil which the bill aimed to correct, had reached to such an height and extent, that not only seditious papers were printed and diffused, but meetings were publicly advertised and holden, at which discourses were delivered of a seditious nature, calculated to mislead the minds, confound the judgment, and influence the passions, of the multutide, industriously collected to hear them. To that, clearly and undeniably, was to be ascribed the outrage which had recently been committed. It was no longer the flimsy pretence of some imaginary grievance, no longer the slight pretext of a wish for a Parliamentary Reform, that could be alledged and avowed as the motive for such meetings, and for such conduct. That thin veil had been lately torn away, and, in the face of broad day, an attempt had been made, directly, on the person of the Sovereign. Every man must

admit, that more effective measures had been thus rendered necessary for the prevention of a return of similar outrages; and his Lordship ascribed that attack to the toleration of those licentious proceedings which had recently been witnessed in the vicinity of the metropolis. Indeed, the treasonable and seditious speeches, which had, of late, been so insidiously disseminated, at public meetings, together with the number of libels otherwise circulated, were so general, and so notorious, that they most particularly called for the interference of Parliament. It was the bounden duty of the Ministers to endeavour to check their flagitious tendency; and their first care had been to turn to the laws of the country, and to the history of Parliament, in order to ascertain what precedents existed applicable to the occasion, and how our ancestors had conducted themselves under similar circumstances;—such precedents had been found, and the bill now introduced was grounded on them; and, indeed, was, in a great measure, copied from two acts, one passed in the reign of Elizabeth, and the other in that of Charles the Second.

On the introduction of the second bill, to the House of Commons, Mr. Pitt observed, that the public had seen, with becoming indignation, that a virtuous and beloved Sovereign

had been attacked in the most criminal and outrageous manner, and at a time, too, when he was in the exercise of the greatest and most important functions of kingly capacity, when he was going to assemble the great council of the nation,—that great, and, indeed, only, resource against every national evil. The first sensations of every man's mind, so immediately directed against the life of the King of these realms, must be those of horror and detestation of the wicked, the diabolical wretches, who, in contempt of the respect and reverence due to the sacred character of their Sovereign, in contempt of the whole legislature, by a kind of concentrated malice, directed a blow, at once, at its three branches, in attempting to assassinate a mild and benignant Monarch, who was the great cement and centre of our glorious constitution. In contemplating this calamity, it would be felt, that some correction must be given to the laws at present in force against such crimes; means must be found to repress the spirit which gave birth to so daring an outrage, and to prevent such unprecedented consequences of sedition, and of sedition, too, leading to assassination, by the most despicable, as well as the most dangerous, of all modes of attack, against the vital principles of the State, in the person of the Sovereign.

If, under this first impression, every man should think himself called upon, by the loyalty and allegiance which he owed to the Sovereign office, by the reverence due to religion, by self-preservation, and the happiness of society at large, to apply a remedy to these very alarming symptoms, another impression would arise out of it, equally forcible, and equally obvious; namely, that the House would do this business but by halves, and act carelessly and ineffectually, if they directed their attention only to that separate act, and not to those mischievous and formidable circumstances which were connected with it, in point of principles, and which produced it, in point of fact.

Mr. Pitt declared, that, in pointing out to the House such a remedy as, in his mind, would be efficient, he should not be governed by legal distinctions, but by prudential principles. If the House viewed the separate act with that eye of horror which he conceived they must; and if so viewing it, they felt the conviction, that means should immediately be adopted for preventing a repetition of such enormities, the next point which would press upon their minds, as arising out of the two former, was, that some measure should be devised for putting a stop to those seditious assemblies, which served as vehicles of faction

and disloyalty,—which fanned, and kept alive, the flame of disaffection, and filled the minds of the people with discontent. He had the most indubitable proof to support him in the assertion, that this sentiment pervaded, not only that House, but the whole kingdom; and that in no one instance which had ever occurred, were the Commons called upon more loudly, by the wishes and prayers of an anxious community, than they were at this time, by the whole people of England, to avert the ruin with which these assemblies menaced the country, by preventing their farther proceedings.

He then adverted to the bill for the protection of the Royal Person, brought into the other House by Lord Grenville, and proceeded to state, that the meetings to which he alluded were of two descriptions; under the first of which fell those meetings which, under a pretext (to which they by no means adhered) of petitioning Parliament for rights, of which they affected to be deprived, agitated questions, and promulgated opinions and insinuations, hostile to the existing government, and tending to bring it into disrepute with the people. The other descriptions, though less numerous, not less public, nor less dangerous, were concerted, evidently, for

the purpose of disseminating unjust grounds of jealousy, discontent, and false complaints, against the constitution,—of irritating the minds of the people against their lawful governors, and of encouraging them to the commission of acts even of treason itself. In these meetings, every thing which could create faction, every thing which could excite discontent, every thing which could prepare the minds of those who attended for rebellion, was industriously circulated. Both these descriptions of meetings required some strong law for their suppression; for if the arm of the executive government was not strengthened by such a law, they would be continued, if not to the utter ruin, certainly to the indelible disgrace of the country.

As to the first description, no one would venture to deny the right of the people to express their opinions on political men and measures, and to discuss and assert their right of petitioning all the branches of the legislature; nor was there any man who would be further from encroaching on that right than Mr. Pitt himself. It was undoubtedly a most valuable privilege, of which nothing should deprive them. But, on the other hand, if meetings of this kind were made the mere cover, or the pretext, for acts which were as inconsistent with the liberty of the subject, as it was

possible to imagine any thing to be; if, instead of stating grievances, the people were excited to rebellion; if, instead of favoring the principles of freedom, the very foundation of it was to be destroyed, and with it the happiness of the people, it was high time for the legislature to interpose with its authority.

In the application of the desired remedy, two things were to be considered;—the first, to correct the abuse of a sacred and invaluable privilege; the second, to preserve that privilege inviolate. — Caution was, therefore, necessary, lest, on the one hand, the rights of the people should be encroached on; or, on the other, the abuse of those rights should be suffered to become the instrument of their total extinction. This was justly considered as a matter of great delicacy;—but the real question was, did not the pressure of the moment render some remedy necessary?

" A more clear and defined power, in the magistrate, was evidently wanting to disperse, and put an end to, all meetings likely to be productive of such consequences as had been noticed. It was by no means intended, Mr. Pitt said, to apply this power of dispersion to meetings professedly, and obviously, lawful, and held for legal and constitutional purposes; but that, in every case of a numerous meeting,

of whatever nature, or under whatever colour, notice should be given, so as to enable the magistrate to keep a watchful eye over their proceedings. The object of this notice was to enforce the attendance of the magistrate, for the preservation of the public peace, for preventing any measure which might tend to attack, or to bring into contempt, either the Sovereign himself, or any branch of the established government of the country. The magistrate was to be empowered to apprehend any persons whose conduct should seem calculated for those purposes, and any resistance to a magistrate, so acting, was to be deemed felony in every person concerned in it. On perceiving the proceedings of such meeting to be tumultuous, and leading to bad consequences of the nature described, the magistrate would have power, similar to that which the riot-act already conferred on him, to disperse that assembly; and, after reading the riot-act, and ordering them to disperse, any number of persons remaining, would, as by the riot-act, incur the penalty of the law—felony. This summary power, proposed to be vested in the magistrate, would still leave to the people the fair right to petition, on the one hand, but would, on the other, prevent the abuse of it.

Of the other description of meetings to be

subjected to legislative restrictions, were public lectures, delivered by men who made the dissemination of sedition the means of subsistence. To them Mr. Pitt proposed to apply regulations something like those which had passed about fourteen years before, in an act, called *Mansfield's* Act, by which all houses, wherein meetings of an improper kind were holden on a Sunday, were to be considered, and treated, as *disorderly houses.* Such were the outlines of the proposed bill, as stated by Mr. Pitt, when he moved the House for leave to bring it in.

These bills, in their progress through the two Houses, gave rise to some of the most animated debates, and to the promulgation of some of the most extraordinary and most mischievous sentiments, which Parliament had witnessed for a series of years. The most violent opposers of them were Messrs. Fox, Grey, and Sheridan, all of whom made no scruple to declare their firm conviction, that there was no danger whatever to be dreaded from the numerous societies, now in existence; and denied, in the most explicit terms, all connection between the proceedings of those societies, and of the tumultuous meetings which had been recently holden in the fields near the metropolis, and

the late attempt to murder the King in his way to Parliament.—They even went so far as to support the monstrous assertion of a Peer, already noticed, that Ministers themselves were the authors of that diabolical attempt. At one time, it was ascribed to persons actually employed by Ministers; at other times to their "disbanded spies;"*—in short, to any thing but its true cause. Another of them had the boldness to call the whole body of Ministers traitors, in language too plain to be misunderstood by the least acute persons who heard it, though purposely so guarded as to escape the punishment which it richly deserved. It was urged by Ministers, said this decorous senator, that there were not only discontented men, but traitors, in the country, who sought, in the most daring manner, to destroy the constitution;—that there were such wretches, he would readily admit; wretches of the most base and abominable kind; traitors who strove, by the most atrocious means, to subvert the constitution; he would not name who those traitors were, nor in what situations they were placed, but he was convinced that, if suffered to proceed in their iniquitous plans, they would inevitably produce the dreadful effects

* Woodfall's Reports, Nov. 10, 1795, p. 195.—Mr Sheridan's speech.

which were so much *affected* to be apprehended from popular meetings, and private clubs.* Such language was highly unbecoming a member of the House of Commons, who, if he had reason to believe the Ministers to be traitors, was bound, as an honest man, and an upright representative, openly and directly to state such reason to the House, and manfully to support the charge. To skulk beneath an ambiguous expression, and indirectly to assert what he did not dare fairly to state, was mean and pusillanimous. He further declared, that he could not conceive any connection between the meeting at Copenhagen-House and the outrage which had been committed on his Majesty's person; so far from it, he would rather incur the imputation of acting with those men to whom Ministers alluded, than suffer the motion made that night to pass without his most marked disapprobation; considering it, as he did, as *an attempt to rob the people of their dearest rights, and enslave the nation.*

On the other hand, it was contended, that there was an intimate connection between the proceedings at Copenhagen-House, and the disgraceful outrage which followed; and that

* Idem Ibid. P. 198. Mr. Grey's speech.

this was so obvious, that it was wonderful any man, possessed of the common powers of reasoning, should doubt it. An attempt had been made against the King, and a doctrine was preached on the practice of "King killing." The doctrine was preached, and the attempt was made. The designs of the speakers were not disguised; they publicly declaimed against his Majesty and government.*

The same argument was pressed with great force by the Attorney-General, who produced a number of libels, printed by a "Citizen Lee," and circulated at the meetings of the societies which it was the object of one of the bills to suppress. The first of these was entitled, "A Summary of Citizenship;" which described the Tyrants of England to consist of various classes, such as Priests, Soldiers, and Lawyers; priests were stated to be the preachers and supporters of tyranny and monarchy; and which declared, that the Monarch winked at clerical peculation.—The books of Moses and Christ were asserted not to have been written by the authors whose names they bore, but fabricated by the propagators and supporters of despotism. This work was to be

* Mr. Canning's speech, Nov. 16.—Woodfall's Reports, p. 225.

to be printed expressly for the edification and instruction of society. Another book produced, was called, "A Summary of the Rights of Kings;" and was printed by the same citizen, at the Tree of Liberty. It set forth, in general, that the curse of God to man was kingly government;* that the lower orders were sacrificed to Monarchy; and that the poor, luckless inhabitants of this country were half-starved and emaciated. The expressions it contained against the King, were so gross, so base, and so scandalous, that decency forbade to mention them. Every body knew that there were people now who lived by libels; it had become a trade. People went into a shop not to buy a single libel, but into a shop full of nothing but libels. It was not unusual, also, in different parts of the town, to see the wares of useful trades exposed to sale on one side of a shop, and libels on the other;—they appeared to be multiplied for the purpose of rendering prosecution more difficult, and so baffling the law.†

The Attorney-General declared, that, without the aid of these bills, it would be im-

* The text for this precious dissertation was supplied by Earl Stanhope, in one of his speeches in the Upper House.

† Attorney-General's speech, Nov. 16.—Ibid. P. 288.

practicable to put a stop to such flagitous proceedings. He observed, that in the years 1791 and 1792, the object of the societies was, clearly and distinctly, universal suffrage, which was equivalent to no King.—They addressed the Jacobin Societies in France to that effect; and received for answer, from the regicides of that country, that they hoped that England would soon have a National Convention; and that they should be soon employed in transmitting, to the soldiers of England, weapons and pikes, and caps of liberty. Let the language and conduct of the meetings at Sheffield, Wakefield, and Chalk Farm, be duly weighed. They did not say they would petition Parliament; but called their legislators, their plunderers, their enemies, and oppressors, meaning the three branches of the legislature. If these circumstances were considered, the necessity of such a law as that now proposed would be manifest. If the societies and meetings were suffered to proceed, the business of the country could not go on. The libels and doctrines, circulated at St. George's Fields, at Chalk Farm, at the Globe Tavern, and Copenhagen House, were sufficient to inflame and irritate the minds of the people so as to prevent them from properly estimating the blessings which they enjoyed under a free government.

It was not left to Ministers alone to defend these bills, and to expose the futility and falsehood of many of the assertions of Opposition; several of the most respectable of that worthy class of members, distinguished by the appellation of *Country Gentlemen*, stood forward upon this occasion. Sir Francis Basset, in particular, advanced arguments and facts, which no asseverations could shake, and no sophistry could confute. In order to prove the connection between the meeting at Copenhagen House, immediately before Parliament was assembled, and the attack on the King, he quoted the following expression which had been used at that place: "His gracious Majesty is to meet *his* Parliament on Thursday next, and I hope that you will give him a warm reception!"—Would any man of common sense pretend that this expression was to be understood as applying to the applause which arose from attachment, or zeal, for his service? Was it not obviously for the purpose of contumely? Upon the real intent of it, no man living could doubt a single moment. Reference was made, by this worthy Baronet, to the manner and time of passing the riot-act, which vested great power in the magistrates. It passed without inquiry, at a period when there were individuals in the kingdom who wished to

remove the King from the Throne, and to place another upon it. Yet the danger then dreaded was most truly stated to be nothing when compared with the existing danger. Had the family of Stuart been placed upon the Throne, the whole of the constitution would not have been destroyed; the property of every individual would not have been seized; personal distinctions would not have been sacrificed; and some security would have remained for the preservation of the form of our government. If, however, the persons who *now* strove against government should succeed, there would be an end, at once, to the very form of our constitution. The mischiefs of those clubs, which it was the object of the bill to suppress, had struck Sir Francis Basset, as well as many other country gentlemen, so forcibly, that they thought the Minister extremely remiss in not having brought some such measure as the present forward, long before that time, for the consideration of Parliament. He stated one of the questions lately submitted for discussion, at one of the debating societies, to have been—"Whether the People ought to be in a State of Rebellion, in consequence of a Convention Bill passed by Parliament?" These persons must allow Parliament to be either a legal or an illegal assembly; if legal, they ought to

exercise their authority over such daring debates; if illegal, there was an end at once of all their authority. If similar discussions were allowed, he ventured to assert, that the constitution of this country would not last a twelvemonth.*

The assertion of Sir Francis Basset, that a revolution, which would have placed a Monarch of the House of Stuart on the Throne, would not be so fatal to English liberty, as a revolution on French principles, roused the indignation of the great panegyrist of the French Revolution, who declared it to be jacobitism in perfection. What, he asked, would the House of Stuart have done, had they been established on the Throne? *They would have introduced the Catholic Religion, instead of the Protestant.*† They would, *perhaps*, have put an end to Parliament, restrained the rights of Juries, and subverted the Liberty of the Press. But, admitting that they would have done all this, which is not at all probable, (except the intro-

* Sir Francis Basset's speech, in Woodfall's Reports, Nov. 16th, p. 303.

† Mr. Fox's speech, in Woodfall's Reports, Nov. 17th, p. 355. And yet Mr. Fox has since insisted, that the restoration of the Roman Catholic religion constituted no part of their plan who wished to restore James the Second to the Throne!

duction of Popery) would not a French Revolution have done much more? It would have destroyed all religion, all justice, all laws, all morals, and all property.

The arguments of Sir Francis Basset were principally supported by Lord Mornington, who took a most able and comprehensive view of the subject. He shewed, that the seditious societies had again held their meetings, and developed their designs, in publications of the most dangerous tendency. In one of these they stated, "that they had suffered a storm; that their vessel was endangered, but now had put to sea with greater prospect of success than ever; that they had the satisfaction to see their principles actively propagating among their countrymen; and that their numbers multiplied at the rate of one hundred and fifty new members in a week; and sometimes seventy or eighty in a day." It seemed as if the whole of the British nation were convened on this extraordinary occasion; for, upon their own declaration, they had renewed their system, and increased the means of propagating their doctrines. They had told the people what they were to expect from inertness, and what from supplication; and exclaimed, "How long, Oh, foolish countrymen, will you call upon

Hercules?"—An exclamation, the meaning of which was too obvious to require explanation.

Though the French Revolutionists were objects of admiration to these societies, the late conduct of the Gallic Patriots, in modifying their democratical principles, and still more, no doubt, in giving a death blow to all *corresponding* and *affiliated* societies, had highly offended their fellow-labourers in this country. For they were now accused of having, in their new constitution, adopted an imperfect system, by abandoning the principle of equality, by rendering property a necessary qualification in electors, and in giving up the right of universal suffrage. The societies, for the better execution of their plan, affected to adopt a pacific system, declaring, "That they did not mean to demand rights with arms, but by certain measures, of such a nature, that the House of Commons *must* accede to them; and that, if any despaired of obtaining a reform, and looked for that to riot, they would tell them, that it was not riot *that* could bring about a REVOLUTION which *every one must wish for.*" This pacific system, however, was only to be continued, provided the Parliament would voluntarily submit to the absurd and extravagant doctrines of universal suffrage, and annual Parliaments, which was neither more nor less,

than a surrender of the constitution. The ignorance of the lower classes of the people they considered as the grand prop of the constitution, since it led them to cherish those artificial distinctions, without which it could not subsist. It was, therefore, proposed to remove this ignorance by the wide circulation of cheap publications among them, the expences of which were to be defrayed from the revenue of the societies. In this notable scheme, for the illumination of ignorant subjects, with the patriotic view of converting them into enlightened rebels, three societies were more particularly engaged;—the London Corresponding Society, the Society of the Friends of Liberty, and the London Reforming Society; from books sold by the printers and booksellers of these societies, specially recommended by them as *patriot booksellers*, in whose hands, too, the petition of the meeting at Copenhagen-House was left, for the purpose of receiving signatures, Lord Mornington quoted several passages, in corroboration of his arguments. The object of these books was to excite the poor to seize the landed property of the kingdom; to stir up the soldiery to mutiny; to degrade and debase the naval and military characters; to stigmatize every naval and military success as a misfortune; to represent the administration of justice as corrupt from its very

source; and the judges as venal, and influenced by the King and his Ministers; to mark the nobility as a degraded race, and to invite the people to hurl them from their seats; to hold up monarchy as a burden, and hereditary monarchy as useless, absurd, and founded on false principles; and to take every opportunity of ridiculing the person of our Sovereign with the most immediate licentiousness; to recommend regicide; to blaspheme the scriptures, and revile religion, as accessaries to the system which they condemned as ruinous, oppressive, and corrupt; and, lastly, to decry the established church and constitution, till they had brought the people to that pitch of frantic rage, that would inevitably end in their pulling down the pillar of the State, and burying the whole fabric in one undistinguishable mass of ruins.

In one of the pamphlets, read in support of these assertions, it was observed, "that the landed property of the country was originally got by conquest, or by encroachment on the property of the people; and, as those *public robbers*, who had so obtained its possession, had shewn no moderation in the use of it, it would not be fit to neglect the precious opportunity of recovering their rights. A few hearty fellows, with arms, &c. might take possession of the whole; a particular committee be appointed to

receive it; all the possessors be called upon to deliver up to that committee, their writings and documents, in order to be burned; and the owners be made to disgorge the last payment of their tenants, in order to form a fund for *good* citizens; and, if the aristocracy rose in resistance, let the people be firm, and dispatch them, cutting off root and branch." This simple proposal, for adopting the Parisian mode of acquiring wealth, was published by a bookseller and printer, at whose house the Copenhagen-House petition lay for signatures.

Another of these patriotic productions contained a definition of a guillotine,—" An instrument of rare invention. As it is the custom to decapitate, and not hang Kings, it is proper to have this instrument ready, to make death easy to them, supposing a necessity of cutting them off.—This instrument is used only for great malefactors, such as Kings, Bishops, and Prime-Ministers. England and France have had their regular turns in executing their Kings;—France did it last, &c."—The pamphlet in which was displayed this kind and considerate regard for the ease of Sovereigns, in their last moments, and in which *Ankerstroem* and *Damiens*, the Swedish and French regicides, were held up to the reverence of mankind, was also published by one of the

patriotic Printers, Citizen Lee, recommended by the societies.

It was maintained, by Lord Mornington, and with great truth, that this language proceeded from the heart of as foul a traitor as ever raised the dagger of a parricide. It was not even English treason;—it was all French.—It resembled more the bloody page of Marat, or the sanguinary code of Robespierre, than the production of an Englishman. His Lordship unequivocally stated, on his own knowledge, that one production entitled *King-killing*, and another called *The Reign of George the Last*, were sold at Copenhagen-House. Under such impressions as these did the persons assembled go there to discuss political subjects. There the present scarcity was attributed not to the failure of crops, but to parliamentary corruption. The people were taught, that they had no hope left from legislative or executive powers, but that they were to look to themselves alone, since they could expect no redress from the constituted authorities. It was under these circumstances, and at this crisis, that the attack was made upon the King; and while the nation was in consternation and horror at the event, a printer had the audacity to publish a libel, in which the whole of the facts were mis-

represented, with a view to excite the ridicule and contempt of the people.*

To these arguments and facts, which carried conviction to every mind which the torpedo of party had not benumbed, Mr. Sheridan opposed nothing but senseless ridicule, misplaced irony, and bold assertions. Aware of the impression which such proofs as Lord Mornington had exhibited must produce upon the House, and utterly unable to invalidate them, he descended to a most unworthy subterfuge, and *denied* what he could not *controvert*. He did not hesitate to say, in answer to those who quoted paragraphs, pamphlets, and hand-bills, that "he paid no credit to their assertions, and *was resolved to give none*; and if he were to single out any person from the crowd (without the insinuation of a personal affront) he should declare that the noble Lord was the least entitled to his credit."†

However indecorous this alledged incredulity might be it was highly politic. He treated the apprehensions of evil effects from the revolutionary proceedings of the day with derision and contempt. The arguments which

* Lord Mornington's speech, of November the 17th.---Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports, p. p. 332—339.

† Idem. Ibid. P. 340.

Lord Mornington had made use of, to prove the connection between the proceedings of the London Corresponding Society, and the *accidental* outrage which had been offered to the person of the Sovereign, neither dazzled his sight, nor satisfied his understanding.—In fact, he did not believe there was any more connection between the two, than between the noble Lord's speech and the question in debate.

It was as little compatible with the dignity of a national council, as it was consistent with common sense, to talk of an *accidental* attempt to murder the King! That *accident*, in the same spirit, Mr. Sheridan ascribed to the pressure of distress; and, with a kind of revolutionary logic, observed, " other riots, other tumults, other insurrections, had been frequent in almost every county throughout England; and his Majesty's troops had *often* been called upon to shed the blood of his Majesty's subjects, who had been guilty of riot and disturbance, *on account of the distress and famine arising from the war!** thus crowding into

* Woodfall's Reports, November 17, p. 342.---The whole of this speech was nearly as inflammatory as any of the speeches at Copenhagen-House, and not more argumentative. It was altogether unworthy a man of Mr. Sheridan's abilities; it was throughout a paltry attempt to flatter the populace; and, in many respects, a mere echo of the declamatory harangues of the political field-preachers.---Towards the close of it, he told the

a single sentence, as many false assertions, and inflammatory insinuations, as were ever compressed, by the most ingenious revolutionist, in so small a space.

In the course of these discussions every epithet expressive of abuse, which the language could supply, without descending to the vocabulary of Billingsgate, was exhausted by the Opposition, on the bills before the House, and on the Ministers and members by whom they were supported. Every attempt was made to excite the people to rise, in order to prevent the bills from passing, by intimidating Parliament, and to stimulate them to resist their execution when passed, *which could only be done by open revolt, and acts of rebellion.*

In the debate of the 17th of November, Mr. Fox, after representing the bill for the suppression of seditious meetings as absolutely destructive of the very basis of the constitu-

House,---" They should consider that they were all of them the *servants of the people of England.*---They voted and acted in that House not in their individual capacity, but as *agents and attornies* for others;" and yet he could talk of a *libel* upon the Constitution, and upon the House of Commons! " The conduct of the societies," which preached treason and sedition, " he considered himself bound to defend, *because* the societies were the objects of general obloquy and clamour." By the same rule, he ought to have defended the conduct of Damiens, Robespierre, and Ankerstroem!

tion, declared, that, should it pass, *it would cost him but little anxiety, that a spirit of resistance was found impossible to be suppressed.* He believed a spirit of discontent to be pretty general in the country at present; and he had no hesitation in saying, that it originated in a bad government, in wicked and ruinous measures, and in the blind and unmeaning confidence which the people had too long reposed in an unfortunate and desperate administration.*

Here a resistance, not to be controlled by the laws, was evidently anticipated, with any thing but regret; and a justifiable motive, in the estimation of the speaker, assigned for its existence. Six days after, he recurred to the same subject, and said, that if the bills were to pass, and *his opinion were asked by the people, as to their obedience, he should say that it was no longer a question of morality or duty, but of prudence.* It would, indeed, be a case of extremity alone which could justify resistance, and *the only question would be, whether that resistance were prudent?*—And this sentiment, which was as clear and direct an exhortation to rebellion as words could convey, he declared to be the result of *deliberation.*†

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795. November 17, p. 348.

† Idem. Ibid. November 23, p. 454.

That such was the impression made on the minds of the House, at the time the speech was delivered, is evident from the observations of Mr. Pitt, who immediately rose and declared, that, consistently with his duty, as a member of Parliament, with his feelings as a man, with his attachment to his Sovereign, and his veneration for the constitution, he could not hear such sentiments avowed, without rising instantly to express his horror and indignation at them. Mr. Fox had made a bold, broad, and unqualified declaration, that, if his arguments and his measures did not prevent the passing of bills which a great majority of the House conceived to be necessary for the security of the person of the Sovereign, and the preservation of the rights of the people, he would have recourse to different means of opposition. He had avowed his intention of setting up his own arguments in opposition to the authority of the legislature. He had said, that if his advice were asked, he would put the propriety of resistance only on the question of prudence, without considering whether the consequences of this advice might be followed by the penalties of treason, and the danger of convulsion, thus openly advising an appeal to the sword, which must either consign its authors to the vengeance of the violated law, or involve the country in anarchy and

bloodshed. Mr. Fox had taken care not to be mistated; happily for the country, this declaration of his principles was too clear to admit of a doubt. Mr. Pitt was glad that he had been so unreserved and explicit. The House and the country would judge of his conduct from his own language; they might see the extent of his veneration for the constitution, and of his respect for Parliament, when, in violation of his duty, in defiance of legal punishment, he could bring himself to utter such sentiments. Mr. Pitt was glad that he had made that avowal, because he hoped it would warn all the true friends of the constitution to rally round it for its defence. He would not enter into a discussion of the abstract right of resistance, or what degree of oppression, on the part of the government, would set the people free from their allegiance; he would only remind the House, that the principles of those bills, to which such language had been applied, had met with the approbation of a large majority, and he trusted that majority had not forgotten what was due to themselves and their country. He hoped they would convince Mr. Fox that they had not lost the spirit of their ancestors, to which such frequent reference had been made; and that, if they were driven, by treason, to the hard necessity of defending the constitution by

force, they would act with that irresistible energy which such a crime would necessarily excite in a loyal assembly. The power of the law of England, he trusted, would be sufficient to defeat the machinations of all who risqued such dangerous doctrines, and to punish treason wherever it might be found. Should the law fail, all the true friends to the constitution must fight under its banner, and display as much vigour in a good cause as desperate men might exert in a bad one. They must hazard, if necessary, their lives, their fortunes, and every thing held dear, to rescue themselves from that anarchy, that wretchedness, into which such unremitting efforts were made to plunge the country.*

This strong, but just, comment on Mr. Fox's speech, led that gentleman to re-state his expression.—His, he pronounced to be the sentiments for which our forefathers shed their blood, and upon which the revolution was founded. But, that he might not be mistaken, he said, that the case he put was, that these bills might be passed by a corrupt majority of Parliament, contrary to the opinion and sentiments of the great body of the nation. If the majority of the people approved of these

* Woodfall's Reports, November 23, 1795, p. 455. 457.

bills, he would not be the person to inflame their minds, and stir them up to rebellion; but if, in the general opinion of the country, it was conceived, that these bills attacked the fundamental principles of our constitution, he then maintained, that the propriety of resistance, instead of remaining any longer a question of morality, would become merely a question of prudence. He might be told that these were strong words; but strong measures required strong words. He would not submit to arbitrary power, while there remained any alternative to vindicate his freedom.*

This explanation served only to fix Mr. Fox's meaning as it was before expressed.—If the majority of the people were adverse to the bills, and should conceive them to attack the fundamental principles of the constitution, then, should they pass, they would be justified, in his opinion, in having recourse to a rebellion; —and it would be the duty of a good patriot, under such circumstances, to stir them up to rebellion; unless, indeed, he should be restrained by more prudential considerations, arising out of their comparative strength with that of the government, and the consequent probability of success in their attempts to overthrow it.

* Woodfall's Reports, November 23, p. 457.

Throughout the whole of this discussion, Mr. Fox and his associates reprobated these bills as most wicked and atrocious, as subversive of the liberty of the press, as a blow aimed at the outworks of the constitution; neither more nor less than a daring attempt to subvert its very foundation, and the freedom of discussion. Upon the liberty of the press the basis of the constitution was known to rest;—take this away, and the whole fabric must fall.* All his arguments, all his conclusions, went to prove, not only that the bills did attack the fundamental principles of the constitution, but that the majority of the people were convinced that they did so.† This was the language of the whole party, when they addressed the people at the popular meetings which were holden in different places, for the consideration of the question; or when

* See Woodfall's Reports, November 17, p. 358.

† In the very last debate on the subject, Mr. Fox thus expressed himself:—"I believe it (the bill) to be, in the true sense of the phrase, *as clearly against the general sense of the people of the country*, and as entirely unpopular, as any measure that has ever been brought before Parliament."—And again,—"Nothing gives me more pleasure and satisfaction than to feel, that *a vast majority of the people of England agree with me in this daring attack on our Constitution.*"—Woodfall's Reports, Dec. 3, p. 202, 203.

they expatiated in Parliament on the numerous petitions which were presented against the bills. And, therefore, it was the obvious and necessary inference, that, in Mr. Fox's opinion, the moment the bills passed into laws, the people would be justified in rising in rebellion against them. Such were *not* the sentiments of our ancestors, who brought about the revolution of 1688; nor the principle on which that revolution was founded. The patriots of that day were too wise to discuss the abstract right of resistance; to investigate, or attempt to ascertain, the causes which would justify rebellion; or to reason on a supposed majority of the people as opposed to a known and decisive majority of their representatives. They wisely contented themselves with the application of an adequate remedy to an existing evil, and with providing for the immediate exigency, which called for their interference, though possibly not in the most regular, nor most unobjectionable, manner. The acknowledged basis of the whole proceeding, however, as far as related to the established interruption of the regular line of succession, was the *King's abdication of the Throne*. There is an essential difference between an unnecessary discussion of the abstract right of resistance, with a view to shew what acts of government will justify a rebel-

lion, and the actual recourse to resistance at a crisis which admits of no other remedy, and which, therefore, can neither be foreseen nor provided against.

It was justly remarked by Mr. Windham, that Mr. Fox's explanation took nothing from the dangerous tendency of his original declaration, the meaning of which was obviously the same which had been assigned to it by Mr. Pitt.—It was, that Mr. Fox would advise the people, whenever they were strong enough, to resist the execution of the law. He rested on no majority, but *the majority of force.* He had brought the matter to a crisis, and it was now verging to that point to which, in the opinion of Mr. Windham, it had long tended. It was alarming to the country, but they must look at it;—the danger ought to be known to them; and if they did not see the dreadful precipice, near which they stood, in his apprehension they were lost for ever.—At least, they had a fair warning; they now knew, from the unequivocal declarations of Mr. Fox, what lengths would be justified; they had time to prepare against the danger, and to provide for their safety; but he would not wish for a dishonourable safety; not a safety gained by flight and pusillanimity; he would have them, in manly fortitude, meet the danger. In that case, Mr.

Fox would find that Ministers were determined to exert a vigour beyond the law, as exercised in ordinary times, and under common circumstances. Times and circumstances would then require stronger laws, and the exertion of more efficacious means for putting these laws in execution. He deprecated the idea of *an abject mind* as much as Mr. Fox; and therefore it was that Ministers, whatever strength and daring were opposed to them, would be able, he trusted, to meet it with an equal degree of strength and combination.

It has been observed, that the principal associates of Mr. Fox joined him in enforcing this doctrine of resistance. In the debate of the twenty-third of November, Mr. Sturt, who had presented a petition against the bills, *from the London Corresponding Society*, speaking in vindication of his *Clients*, (for, according to his friend, Mr. Sheridan's definition of the representative character, he was one of the *Attornies* of the people,) said,—"These people are friends to a parliamentary reform; and they apprehend, that if the Parliament does not accomplish that reform, *a revolution will effect it;* and so do I; nay, I will go further, perhaps, *I think a revolution better of the two!*"* It does not appear,

* Woodfall's Reports, November 23, p. 410.

by the Parliamentary Reports, that this man was called to order by the House; perhaps the Speaker was of opinion, that the ignorance of the declaration was so much greater than its profligacy, as to render silent contempt the most proper mark of disapprobation. In the same debate, Mr. Sheridan insisted that, if the bills should pass, the people would be *slaves;* and, if they were to ask him how they were to act, if those bills passed by corrupt majorities, (and, if they passed at all, they could only pass by majorities which he would consider as corrupt) he should tell them, *they ought to resist whenever they could prudently do it!* As men of spirit could they act otherwise? The people would say, "You, by your language in that House, have *inflamed* us, and now you do not dare to pursue the measures you there maintained."* Here was a clear and explicit avowal, that the language of the Opposition was calculated to inflame the minds of the people, and to rouse them to acts of rebellion!

Mr. Grey, at the same time, declared, with great boldness, that he would not shrink from the principle advanced by Mr. Fox; and he would repeat with him, that if, by the government of the country, measures were carried

* Idem. Ibid. P. 449.

into effect, contrary to the wishes of a great majority of the people, (not to be ascertained by the voice of their representatives in Parliament) to the liberties of the nation, (of which he himself was to be the judge) if he should be asked, whether the people ought to refrain from resistance, he would say that they should only be induced to refrain from motives of prudence.*

When such open exhortations to resistance as these were used in Parliament, and such attempts were made to justify them, on the principles of the revolution, well might Mr. Pitt exclaim—"The charge I urge against the gentlemen in Opposition to these bills is, first, that the means they make use of for spreading an alarm, is misrepresentation; and, secondly, that this alarming of the people is attempted for the express purpose of rousing them, if practicable, to a spirit of resistance against the legislature, with a view to overthrow the acts of the King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembled; and, instead of the peaceable and constitutional means of petitioning, to encourage the people to resort to force, by a language which, I believe, no individual in this country has ever holden before, and which the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) has, at

* Ibid. P. 460.

least, entitled himself to the honour of having introduced into Parliament itself. Of this we complain; nor shall we cease to complain, that those gentlemen, who express such peculiar anxiety for the interests of the people, for the welfare of the country, and such a regard for the privileges of Parliament, that, under pretence of attachment to Whig principles, they have affected to maintain those doctrines which were justifiable only under extraordinary circumstances, and to lay them down as established maxims, founded in truth and general wisdom; because our ancestors had recourse to resistance to a King, who aimed at the overthrow of the national religion; who attempted to govern without Parliaments altogether; who was, in fact, against all law; and who violated the constitution of the country;—they consider this resistance as a general rule, and, in their imitation of the principle, are animating the people, not to an opposition of illegal and unconstitutional exercise of prerogative, or of a wanton disregard of the laws, but to a resistance of a law, legally sanctioned by the three branches of the legislature. I defy these gentlemen to shew the consistency of such conduct with the principles and practice of those whom they profess to make the objects of their imitation."*

* Woodfall's Reports, Nov. 24th, p. 470.

The discussions on the bills, which produced many noble specimens of English eloquence, and none more distinguished than the speech of Mr. Grant, (the present Master of the Rolls) on the 25th of November, which, for strength of argument, solidity of thought, perspicuity of arrangement, and correctness of principle, has seldom been equalled, were protracted to the beginning of December, when they finally passed the House of Commons. The violence of the Opposition produced a very different effect from that which was expected from it; for it considerably diminished their numbers, which were unusually small upon every division, and never was any measure sanctioned by larger majorities. Universal exertions, indeed, had been made to procure petitions against the bills, from every description of persons; but though these efforts were productive of little effect, in biassing the judgment of Parliament, they made a considerable impression on the public mind, and greatly increased that ferment which had before manifested itself.

In considering the bills themselves, it cannot be denied, that the restrictions imposed by one of them, on the exercise of constitutional rights and privileges, were such as could be justified only by imperious necessity; and

had the Minister failed to establish the existence of such necessity, he would have had no solid reason to urge in their support. But the necessity was clearly and fully demonstrated; and it appeared evident to all impartial, unbiassed, and reflecting minds, that nothing less than such remedies as the bills provided, would suffice to stem that torrent of disaffection which, gushing out from various sources, threatened to overwhelm the whole fabric of British freedom.—It is only for the better security of that goodly edifice, that it is allowable to impose even temporary restrictions on the enjoyment of any portion of that liberty which constitutes the birthright of Britons.

By the first of these laws "for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person and government, against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts," it was enacted, that if any persons should compass, or imagine, or intend, death, destruction, or any bodily harm, to the person of the King, or to depose him, or way-lay, in order, by force, to compel him to change his measures or counsels, or to overawe either House of Parliament, or to excite an invasion of any of his Majesty's dominions, and shall express and declare such intentions by printing, writing, or any overt-act, he shall suffer death as a traitor.—And, if any one, by

writing, printing, or other speakings, shall use any words or sentences, to incite the people to hatred and contempt of the King, or of the government and constitution, he shall incur the punishment of a high misdemeanor; that is, fine, imprisonment, and pillory; and, for a second offence, he is subject to a similar punishment, or transportation for seven years, at the discretion of the court. This statute is to continue in force until the end of the next session of Parliament, after the demise of the Crown.

The other statute, for the suppression of seditious meetings, enacts, that no meeting, exceeding the number of fifty persons, shall be holden, for the purpose of any petition, or remonstrance, to the King, or either House of Parliament, for the alteration of any matters established in Church or State, or for the purpose of deliberating on any grievance in the same, unless notice of such a meeting be given, in the names of seven householders, in some public newspapers, five days, at the least, before the meeting; and every publisher of a newspaper, who advertises such a meeting without such a notice as is particularly described in the statute, shall forfeit the sum of £50. Or, instead of being inserted in a newspaper, it may be sent, five days before the meeting, to the clerk of the peace of the county, who

shall immediately transmit a copy of it to three justices of the peace within the county. But all meetings, without such previous notice, consisting of more than fifty persons, assembled for the aforesaid purposes, shall be unlawful assemblies; and if, after a proclamation made by a magistrate to disperse, more than twelve continue together, they will be guilty of a capital felony. And if, in a meeting held pursuant to notice, it shall either be proposed in the notice, or any one shall purpose, at the meeting, to alter, without authority of Parliament, any matter established by law, or make any proposition to excite hatred against the King, or the constitution, then one or more justices may order the assembly to disperse, and may order the persons who made such propositions to be taken into custody. And any person who shall obstruct any magistrate in the discharge of his duty, in enforcing the directions of this statute, shall suffer death without benefit of clergy.

And if any any person shall open a house, where lectures shall be read upon public grievances, or the laws and government of these kingdoms, to which persons shall be admitted for money, such house, unless previously licensed, shall be considered a disorderly house; and the person, by whom it is opened, shall

forfeit £100; and all other persons concerned, as the president or chairman at such lectures, or all who shall pay or receive money for admission, or who shall deliver out tickets, shall also forfeit the same sum. But two justices may grant a license to read such lectures, which shall continue in force for one year, unless sooner revoked by the justices at quarter sessions. But this statute does not extend to lectures in the Universities, or to discourses given by school-masters to their scholars;—and all county or other meetings, called by the Lord-Lieutenant or Sheriff; as well as meetings called by two justices, or by the major part of a grand jury; or by the proper officers of a corporation, are specially exempted from the operation of the act.—Three years was the period assigned for the duration of this act; but the experience of its beneficial effects induced the legislature to renew it.*

* The learned Editor of Blackstone,* in reference to this act, observes, "the seditious meetings, which were held before the passing of this statute, were, in fact, temporary insurrections, and a scandal to a regular government; and, however vehement the arguments of some, but principally of those whom they were intended to restrain, that public liberty was endangered, yet it ought to be remembered, that public liberty cannot exist without public security. The antient constitu-

* Professor Christian.

In an early stage of the debates on these bills, Mr. Sheridan took an opportunity of venting his spleen against the magistrates, who had been appointed under the new Police Act. Alluding to the authority to disperse seditious meetings, proposed to be vested in the magistrates, he desired the House to recollect what the magistrates were in Westminster, who were to be entrusted with this authority.—*They were not like the gentlemen of that House, of independent fortunes, and administering justice gra-*

tional meetings for the investigation of public affairs, with which our forefathers were contented, are not, in the smallest degree, affected by this statute. A public meeting may, at any time, be called to take into consideration the state of the nation, or the conduct of the King's Ministers, by a Lord Lieutenant, *custos rotulorum*, Sheriff of a county, a convener of a county, or stewartry of Scotland, two Justices of the Peace, the major part of a grand Jury, either at the assizes or quarter sessions, the Mayor, or head officer, of any city, or town corporate, or the Alderman, or head officer, of any ward or division, or any corporate body. All these may, in their respective jurisdictions, call public meetings, which have the same uncontrolled power of discussion as they had before the statute. Can, then, any wise and well-intentioned Englishman say that his liberty is violated by this valuable statute?"

Blackstone's Commentaries, thirteenth edition, with notes and additions, by Edward Christian, Esq. &c. &c. Vol. IV. Note to P. 89.

*tuitously on their own estates, but paid creatures, pensioners, and venal dependents on Ministers;---men without independence, without integrity, and without talents.** A libel, more atrocious, more

* "What is to be done to render them fit for their offices? First you must give them independence, then integrity, and lastly talents." Woodfall's Reports, Nov. 10, 1795, p. 194. If these magistrates were *not*, as Mr. Sheridan asserted, men of independent fortunes, like *some* members of that House of Commons, they were, also, *not* like other members of *that* House of Commons, profligate retailers of seditious and treasonable sentiments, sacrificing public duty to the gratification of personal malice, and disappointed ambition;---they were *not* men who courted the privilege of Parliament as the only means of securing themselves from a gaol;---they were *not* men who assumed the mask of patriotism to cover the most selfish and desperate views;---they were *not* men who gloried in acts for which others, in less favoured situations, have met with ignominious, and highly-deserved, punishment;---they were *not* men, who, making a boast of independence, did not dare to shew their faces in public till returned, by the pliant courtesy of some convenient friend, for one of those venal boroughs, which had formed the constant subject of their public censures;---they were *not* the vulgar pandars of a turbulent populace; nor yet the prating parasites of an easy Prince;---they were *not* political quacks, who retailed their pestilential nostrums to the ignorant mob, to poison their minds, and to receive their dear-bought plaudits in return;---they were *not* hypocritical demagogues who, steadily pursuing a systematic course of disloyalty, occasionally strayed into the fields of loyalty, to gather the flowers of popularity, when they were not to be found elsewhere;---and, lastly, they were *not* profligate spendthrifts, rioting in sensual debauchery, making dis-

indecent, and more false, was never uttered in any of those seditious meetings, the object of which was to defame, with a view to destroy, the constituted authorities of the country. If the magistrates of Westminster were really such profligate and despicable characters, as the licentious tongue of a demagogue here dared to represent them, the Lord Chancellor, without whose authority they could neither be appointed, nor yet continue to act, deserved to be impeached for as gross a breach of his public duty as any of which he could well be guilty. But it was more prudent, and more safe, though certainly less honourable and courageous, to attack a body of men who had no means of defence, than to revile Ministers who were present, and prepared to hurl back the abuse lavished on them on the heads of their opponents. The contemptible opinion here avowed of the police magistrates of the

honesty and fraud the subject of mirth, and the theme of a jest, prostituting the bounteous gifts of nature, genius, and talents, to the most unworthy purposes, and reducing themselves below the level of the brute. It would have been but fair in Mr. Sheridan, when intent on describing the *negative* qualities of these objects of his reprehension, so to have extended the list of them as to make it productive of its *proper* effect. His friends speak loudly of his *candour*,---what a pity, then, he should have suffered so fine an opportunity for its display to elude his grasp.

metropolis, if there were really any thing more than mere rant and declamation, in this attack of Mr. Sheridan, was evidently founded on the circumstance of their receiving salaries for their services; but the same objection would apply to the judges themselves; the only difference between them being, that the latter are appointed for life, and the former only for a limited time, settled by the legislature. If this were a radical objection, justice could not be administered at all in the metropolis, as it would be impossible to find men, properly qualified for the office, who would devote the whole of their time to the gratuitous discharge of such important duties; and it must again be left to the most venal of all men, who literally converted its administration into a regular trade. It must be admitted, however, that so long as the situation of police magistrates continues to be less permanent than the situation of judges, their conduct should excite a great degree of constitutional jealousy, and a strict vigilance, in all cases in which the Crown is immediately concerned. If either judge or magistrate could so far forget his duty as to carry with him his political passions and prejudices into the seat of justice, and suffer them to influence his judicial decisions, he would be a disgrace to his station, and public reprobation

should be the reward of his profligacy. But besides the pride of character which may naturally be supposed to attach to persons in such situations, they are further bound, by the solemn obligation of an oath, to administer justice according to law; before, therefore, they are accused of conduct, which would amount to a commission of wilful perjury, something more than loose asseverations, and the interested deductions of distempered zeal, should be adduced in support of the charge. Let facts be brought forward; let proofs fix the criminality; and then the voice of vengeance cannot be too loud; nor the hand of punishment too severe. But, whatever licentiousness of speech the rules of Parliament may allow, the public violation of truth and decency is disgraceful to any Christian assembly; and, as the endeavour to bring the magistracy of the country into contempt, is, from its tendency to produce the worst effects on society, marked by the particular disapprobation of the law, it should, when made by a legislator, incur the strongest censure.

Another incidental question was brought into discussion, during the same debates. Mr. Reeves had published a pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts on the English Government," and

addressed to the quiet good sense of the people, which contained some severe strictures on the Whigs, and, consequently, gave great offence to the Opposition.

The ingenuity of Mr. Sturt, who stood forward as the champion of the London Corresponding Society, and as the advocate of them all, and of the printer of the treasonable hand-bills, and who, at this very moment, declared, that, for his part, he should prefer a *revolution* to a *reform*,* was exercised in discovering, in this tract, which was designed for men of far different intellects from his own, something which he was pleased to term a libel on the constitution.—He introduced the passage, which he had selected for censure, to the notice of the House, by requesting permission to "read a bit of treason." In this passage the author had compared the British Monarchy to a tree,† the stock of which was the Monarch,

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports, November 23, 1795, p. 410.

† The comparison of the British Constitution to a tree was not a new thought. In the "*Relations and Observations, Historical and Politick*, upon the Parliament, begun in Anno Domini 1640, &c." printed in 1648; a representation of "THE ROYALL OAKE OF BRITTAYNE," may be seen, with a gang of Presbyterians and Independants, busily employed in hewing it down, with intent to cast the whole of it, trunk as well as branches, into the fire.

and the Lords and Commons the branches.—"But these," said the author, "are only branches, and derive their origin, and their nutriment, from their common parent: they may be lopped off, and the tree be a tree still; shorn, indeed, of its honours, but not, like them, cast into the fire. The Kingly government may go on, in all its functions, without Lords and Commons; it has, heretofore, done so for years together; and, in our times, it does so during every recess of Parliament; but, without the King, his Parliament is no more."

A plain man would naturally have supposed, that the mere statement of a constitutional fact, that the British Monarchy does not cease to exist, while the Parliament ceases to sit, or after it has been dissolved, (and nothing more either was or could be meant by this passage,) a fact as obvious to the most ignorant of the multitude as to the most profound lawyer, or the most acute statesman, could neither meet with contradiction from any one, nor afford the least food for party or faction to feast upon. "But," exclaimed the erudite commentator of the House of Commons;—"lopped off!—This is a pretty fellow!—What sort of a tree will the Constitution be when the House of Commons is lopped off?" This learned question might certainly have been aptly an-

swered by another question;—What sort of a tree was the Constitution when the House of Commons was last dissolved?

The subject thus mentioned, incidentally, was improved upon, without loss of time, by Mr. Sheridan, who vented his spleen against the Father of the Loyal Associations, whom he abused as a most atrocious libeller of the Constitution;—the whole party joined in the senseless outcry; and a *ministerial hireling*, with other tropes and figures, in constant use with the faction, was echoed from one end to the other of the Opposition-bench. But Mr. Sheridan, who had so recently avowed his opinion, that he should not be a man of spirit if he did not advise the people to resist the execution of the law, in other words, to rebel, now resolved to prove his legitimate title to that character, by lavishing every coarse invective which a vulgar mind could generate on the *supposed* author of this harmless tract, in a place where he had no opportunity of repelling the attack.

The party were perfectly sensible that Mr. Sturt was not a fit person to be intrusted with the management of so delicate a question; and it was soon resolved, therefore, to take it out of his hands. One better skilled in party manœuvres, and more conversant with parliamentary tactics, was selected as the champion of

the Constitution against this formidable assailant. Mr. Sheridan, on the 26th of November, brought the subject regularly, and formally, before the House; and seriously moved, "That the said pamphlet is a most malicious, scandalous, and seditious libel, and highly reflecting on the glorious revolution, containing matters tending to create jealousies and divisions among his Majesty's subjects, to alienate their affections from our present happy form of government, as established in King, Lords, and Commons,* and to subvert the true principles of our free Constitution; and that the said pamphlet is a high breach of the privileges of this House." Ridiculous, and preposterous, as this motion was, as coming from Mr. Sheridan, and applied to Mr. Reeves; and appearing, as it must appear to all who had a knowledge of the principles and writings of this last gentleman, a fit subject only for derision and contempt, it gave rise to a long and curious

* Mr. Sheridan was, no doubt, ignorant that this very proposition of his own, that the sovereignty of this realm was vested in three estates, viz. King, Lords, and Commons, had experienced the same fate which he proposed to allot to the pamphlet of Mr. Reeves. It was formally condemned by a decree of the University of Oxford, in the year 1683, and the book which contained it (written by Dr. Hunton) was ordered to be burned.

debate.—It required, indeed, no common command of countenance, to remain serious, during Mr. Sheridan's speech, after all the inflammatory harangues which the House was in the habit of hearing, from him and his associates.*—Never did the Commons of Great Britain, in modern times at least, appear to so little advantage, as during this discussion. The most gross ignorance of the parliamentary and legal history of the country was displayed; and such *criticism* exhibited, as would have disgraced an undergraduate at either of our universities.—But it

* It appears not a little extraordinary, that Mr. Sheridan should have stigmatized a tract as seditious and libellous for reflecting on the revolution of 1688, when no man has cast more severe reflections on that great event than himself.—In a debate on the twentieth of February, 1800, Mr. Sheridan, alluding to the reign of King William, said, "*The majority of the nation at that period were* JACOBITES;—the JACOBITES *were composed of the nobility, and the landed interest; and were formidable in their principles and opposition to King William.*" This is a direct assertion, that the majority of the nation, in population and property, were adverse to the revolution;—in which case, it must have been a revolution on Jacobinical principles, brought about by the efforts of the few, aided by a foreign force, against the wishes of the many.—It is not possible to cast a stronger reflection "on the glorious revolution;" and if the House of Commons of 1800 had acted consistently with the principles of the House of Commons of 1795, they would have taken down Mr. Sheridan's words, and have passed on them appropriate censures.

answered the purpose of the party, by affording them an opportunity of abusing the most celebrated writers who had combated their principles, and opposed their designs. The *Constitutional Lawyers* joined the wits and witlings of the House, and took a conspicuous part in the debate. Messrs. Jekyll and Erskine united with Messrs. Sheridan and Courtenay, in condemning the performance, as the most dull and despicable of all productions, and yet as the most abusive and dangerous of all libels. It was curious to hear Mr. Courtenay speaking, in a tone of decision, on "The Origin of Government," by the Reverend John Whitaker; being as well qualified to pronounce on the merit of the productions of that learned historian, profound antiquary, and eminent divine; as this last was to appreciate the varied excellencies of the different *nugæ venales*, and *facetiæ parliamentariæ* of ancient and modern times. Mr. Reeves had no more reason to be ashamed of the company in which his enemies chose to place him, with a Whitaker and a Jones, than of the invectives which were lavished on him by a Sheridan and a Courtenay. Mr. Erskine's zeal, as usual, outstripping his discretion, if not his knowledge, led him to anticipate the verdict of the jury, and to declare that, were he a juror him-

self, he would pronounce a verdict of guilty on Mr. Reeves, without leaving the court.*

This torrent of abuse which thus threatened to overwhelm an unprotected individual, and to bear down, as it were, law and justice in its course, Mr. Windham, with that generosity and manliness which so strongly mark his polished mind, alone attempted to stem. He had, on the first introduction of the question, immediately penetrated the motives of his accusers, and endeavoured to put the House on their guard. He loudly condemned the very indecent language which had been applied to Mr. Reeves; the gentlemen, he truly remarked, who had so traduced his character, had, doubtless, good reason for their conduct; the author had incurred their displeasure, in proportion as he

* At the close of his speech, Mr. Erskine said, "When a jury shall be impannelled to try this case, and see the attack upon the Constitution stated in the indictment, they must, I am convinced, *feel themselves involved as parties in the libel*, as well as the House of Commons, which ordered the prosecution."---Woodfall's Reports, November 26, p. 13. And he assigned this as one of his reasons for voting for a prosecution. ---Strange notions of justice must he entertain, who can coolly propose to send a man to be tried by those, who, he confesses, *are parties as well as judges*, in the cause. The House of Commons, indeed, claim the privilege of acting in that double capacity; and, therefore, possibly, its members may be attached to a mode of proceeding which is at variance with every principle of British jurisprudence.

had gained the good-will of the country.—He hoped, that neither the House nor the nation would forget his exertions in 1792, in which he was supported by the whole country. If they forgot these laudable efforts, they were ungrateful. Mr. Reeves was a man holding an honourable place under government, and receiving the reward of honourable services. His general conduct was approved by the greater, and, he was sure, the better, part of the nation. But the conduct of the Opposition had exposed them to the imputation of being too deeply involved in the machinations, which the activity of Mr. Reeves had laboured to counteract;—and why was he on this account to be debarred from speaking his sentiments, or from contributing to defend the Constitution? Mr. Windham told the Opposition, that he knew the purpose of their severity and abuse.—He knew well their motive for traducing Mr. Reeves, and other active Magistrates, and especially those of Westminster, many of whom were men of great respectability. Their designs, and aims, were clearly developed, and their zeal, after their former supineness (in respect of the numerous libels published by the Seditious Societies) well understood.*

* Speech of November 23.---Woodfall's Reports, p. 429, 430.

These observations, on account of their justice, had drawn down on Mr. Windham much of that obloquy which was cast, so profusely, on Mr. Reeves. It did not deter him, however, from delivering his sentiments, when the House were called upon to decide on the question.

He then entered into a masterly analysis of the tract; discriminating, with the most correct judgment, between its different parts and positions; pointing out its clear and obvious meaning; and proving its perfect innocence, both in matter and tendency. With great force of reasoning he vindicated the freedom of discussion on historical subjects. He shewed, that, on such speculative topics, as that discussed by Mr. Reeves, various and contrary opinions were held, not by ignorant and uninformed men, but by persons of acknowledged judgment in law and politics. They were usually considered as proper to be left to the speculations of the learned and the curious;—and, on subjects relative to constitutional history, and the theories of government, the difficulty was to find any source of agreement. It was no easy matter to find two men of learning and sense, who would agree upon the same definition of the constitution of this country. It was well known, that many people differed from Mr.

Hume, and that Mr. Hume and Mrs. Macaulay differed from each other; yet it was never in contemplation to prosecute either of them for their different definitions. To all candid minds, the fair interpretation of the passage, he thought, exempted it from the implication charged upon the intention of the writer. Indeed, it could only be ascribed by the most miserable of all quibbles, a quibble upon subjects refined in themselves, and claiming, for that reason, a larger latitude of interpretation than was allowed by a foolish sort of strictness, the essence of poverty or chicane, and calculated for other objects. When they came to a matter of such difficulty as the constitution of England in the abstract, a constitution of a great country, of amazing elasticity, and consequent modification, under different emergencies, what was it but the highest absurdity and folly, to treat such a speculation like a cause in a criminal court, conducted by an attorney, with the aid of a special pleader and his witnesses.

Points of law demanded one mode of consideration; points of science another. It was one thing to explain mathematics, another to develope political truth. In all writings on government, the evil tendency, either near or remote, should be regarded. With respect to the particular work under consideration, it

should be enquired what was the general idea resulting from the whole? what was the peculiar object of the selected passage, whether it were a lapse in the author, from the general spirit of his work, or what latent motive was likely to have induced him to compose it? Unless such a liberal investigation of facts were adopted, no man could be expected to treat a subject of such difficulty, as the nice and careful analysis of the British constitution, with fairness. To the reading of such works an enlarged mind should be applied, and they should be examined with something of the spirit with which they were written.

Having premised thus much, Mr. Windham proceeded to examine the passage in question, with the spirit which he recommended; but, at the same time, with the greatest critical acumen, he followed the author through the train of ideas, or rather through the series of facts, which led to the conclusion, that the government of England *is a monarchy*. He challenged any one to say, that this assertion was a fallacy. There were, he knew, persons who set up the doctrine, that the King formed no part of the constitution. The contrary, however, was so unalterably true, that, although the monarchy might remain in vigour and activity, without the branches, the branches

could not remain a single instant without the Sovereign. Although these branches were sincerely reverenced by Englishmen, monarchy was, nevertheless, the first in their thoughts; because monarchy was permanent, while the others were variable. He dissected the figure and metaphor of the *tree*, and while he shewed it would not bear the construction which had been put upon it, he detected its inaccuracy, in a single point. The Kingly government, without Lords or Commons, might, undoubtedly, subsist; but when the author said *in all its functions*, unquestionably the expression was inaccurate; that it would be so in the opinion of the author himself was evident from the pamphlet, where, in two pages preceding that which contains this metaphor, he expressly states, that—"the King can enact no laws without the *advice and consent* of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, who are, *in some sort*, counsellors of his own chusing, but also of the Commons in Parliament assembled." Therefore it was not strictly true, philosophically speaking, that it might subsist *in all its functions*, as laws cannot be enacted without the other branches subsisting with the Sovereign. But in all the other functions (except those of the legislature,) it unquestionably was true, that the monarchy might go on without them. He next

referred to the allusion to Charles the First, and to the demises of the Crown, to shew the truth of the assertion; "But without the King, *his* Parliament is no more." These historical facts, he insisted, afforded sufficient grounds for defending the passage upon constitutional principles.—So thoroughly convinced was he of the innocent intentions of the author, that he would as soon put his hand in the fire, as adopt the constructions of the other side of the House. And he called upon the House to remember, that it was not sufficient to send this matter to a jury, because gentlemen thought the charge *probable;* it was unfitting, and disgraceful, if the decision of the jury was, in the least, likely to be against them. They were sending their charge generally, though their judgment stood hypothetically.*

The House were not in a humour to give due weight to these arguments, strong, and, indeed, irresistible as they appear to an impartial mind, nor to adopt the spirit so emphatically recommended, and so ably enforced.—No attempt, even, was made to answer the principal arguments of Mr. Windham. Mr. Pitt, whether resolved that the Opposition should not

* Woodfall's Reports, November 20, p. p. 13. 18.

monopolize the triumph which they anticipated, or convinced, though scarcely credible, of the mischievous tendency so strangely imputed to the pamphlet, adopted the popular side of the question. Admitting him to have been actuated by the former of these motives, his conduct might be *politic*, but was not *generous*. Nor did he display his usual perspicuity and strength in the arrangement and application of his arguments. He premised, at the outset, that if the House considered the nature of the British government, they would find, that they derived their honour, their happiness, and the security of property and principle, from *the three branches which constituted the mixed and limited monarchy of this country;* each of which was equally essential, and without which either would be obviously lessened of its virtue and authority.* Here was a constitutional principle laid down, but in terms loose, vague, and incorrect. Mr. Pitt could only mean, that the King, the Lords, and the Commons, were essential parts of the British constitution; which would be subverted by the destruction of either of them. This position, Mr. Reeves would be the last man in the world to dispute;

* Idem. Ibid. P. 18.

and certainly there was nothing in his tract which could, without a monstrous perversion of terms, and misrepresentation of object, be construed into a denial of it. But the assertion, that *three** *branches* constitute a *monarchy*, is a gross contradiction in terms, and involves a political absurdity. The word *branches*, too, appears to have been here used as synonimous with *estates*, in which case the position is obviously false, as the King is not one of the estates of the realm, ;—the three estates, consisting of the Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal, and the Commons, as declared in the bill of rights, and as appears in the wording of statutes. In a discussion, intending to fix a legal construction on a metaphysical expression, with a view to a judicial proceeding, the use of vague, indefinite, or incorrect, terms, ought particularly to have been avoided. Besides, it does not, of necessity, follow, that, because the King, the Lords, and the Commons, are equally essential to the preservation of the constitution, they are co-equal and co-ordinate in power. The principles of our antient jurists, and the very language of our statutes, forbid us to entertain

* This loose expression first began to prevail in the time of Charles the First; and the use of it is strongly reprobated by Lord Clarendon.

any such supposition. Brauton, speaking of the King, says, "*Omnis sub eo est, et ipse sub nullo, nisi tantum, sub deo.* Lord Coke lays it down as a maxim, that the King is *Caput, principium et finis Parliamenti.* And Dyer tells us, that the *King is the head,* and that the *Lords and Commons are the members.** If it were urged, that this might be considered as constitutional law, previous to the revolution, but that other principles have been introduced by that event, the Whig managers of Sacheverell's trial would supply a satisfactory answer to such a plea;—for they explicitly declared, that it would be *a libel on the revolution,* to say that any innovation in the constitution had taken place at that period.

In combating one of the rules of judgment, laid down by Mr. Windham, Mr. Pitt observed, that the offensive paragraph must be judged of in its *sole,* as well as in its collateral, sense; an author of seditious or libellous matter, ought to find no refuge or defence, in his own *inconsistency.* Yet such a mode of judging is

* Dyer, fol. 60, pl. 19. See this subject discussed in the introduction to the folio edition of Dr. Nalson's "Impartial Collection of the great affairs of State, from the beginning of the Scotch Rebellion in 1639, to the murther of King Charles the First."

not only contrary to the principles of justice, but at variance with the uniform practice of the courts. The whole of a pamphlet, containing a libel, is invariably read to the jury; and, for this plain reason, that it is impossible to collect the author's *intention*, which constitutes the very essence of the imputed crime, from a detached and insulated passage. An author has assuredly no right to find shelter from prosecution, beneath the shade of his own inconsistency. But, on the other hand, no one has a right to select a single passage from a work, and put a construction upon it, inconsistent with the whole spirit and tenour of the book. If the passage, taken by itself, would even seem to warrant such a construction, still it should be carefully compared with what precedes and follows it; from which alone its true and legitimate meaning and intent can possibly be collected.

It was further argued by Mr. Pitt, that the author, in his metaphor, spoke not of a temporary interruption of the functions of Parliament, but of its being *lopped off* entirely. In saying, that the King could go on alone, whether the author meant that the King should possess the legislative power or not, he conceived him to be equally wrong. If the King was supposed to have the power of making

laws, then a total subversion and destruction of the constitution must be presumed. If it was supposed that the King had not the legislative power, in that case the position was equally wrong and absurd. But that the author could never have had it in contemplation to contend, that, if the two Houses of Parliament ceased to be integral parts of the constitution, then Kingly power, as settled by that constitution, could go on, is most certain. Such a conclusion could not be supported by the passage itself, and was utterly inconsistent with the explicit declarations of the author in other parts of the tract. He had expressly stated *how*, and in *what manner*, the kingly power could go on, namely, as it had done in former periods of our history, when Parliament had not been convened for several successive years, and as it still did, during every recess. What pretext, therefore, could there be for imputing to him an intention of maintaining the preposterous assertion, that the British Constitution could subsist, when Parliament was annihilated?

It has been already shewn, that the metaphor was philosophically false, as *all* the functions of sovereignty could not subsist without the power of making laws; and the author had distinctly stated, that the King could not make laws without the advice and consent of the

two Houses of Parliament. But the abstract position, that the King has not the power of making laws, is as unconstitutional, as the assertion that he can make them without such advice and consent. In a very recent instance the Attorney-General had publicly declared, in a court of justice,* "The power of the state, by which I mean *the power of making laws*, and of enforcing the execution of them when made, IS VESTED IN THE KING." There would have been just as much reason for detaching this passage from the Attorney-General's speech, and making it the ground of a criminal prosecution, as there was for adopting the same mode with the author of the pamphlet in question. It would have been an act of great injustice so to do; for the Attorney-General, having stated the broad constitutional principle, (the denial of which, be it observed, is liable to the penalty of premunire, by the statute of Ann, c. 7. sect. 2) proceeded to shew how the King exercised his legislative power,—in the same way in which the author of the tract proceeded to explain *how* the Kingly power goes on, when the Parliament is either prorogued or dissolved.—Mr. Pitt, however, dissented from this construction; and conceiving the real meaning of the passage to convey a doctrine incompatible with the existence of

* In his address to the Jury, on the trial of Hardy for high treason.

the British Constitution, voted for the motion. —But Mr. Sheridan deemed it prudent to expunge from his motion that part of it which charged the pamphlet with being a libel on the revolution. Indeed, it is inconceivable how such a charge could have been preferred in the first instance, or how it could have been tolerated, for a moment, by the House, who, having heard the pamphlet read, (and who ought also to have read it themselves) must have heard that the reformation and revolution "were memorable transactions, conducted in a way that was purely English; that the actors in them proceeded with their remedy as far as the disease went, and no farther; and that they never suffered themselves to lose sight of this main rule, that what they did was to preserve the ancient government, and not to destroy it;" they must also have heard the revolution mentioned "as a precedent regarded with reverence, and with gratitude, towards those who made it." When the motion was so amended it was adopted by the House; a committee of inquiry was then appointed to discover the author;* after sitting some time, and exercising inquisitorial powers on matters not connected with the subject referred to their consideration, and collecting a great deal of illegal evidence, they made

* It is before noticed that the Pamphlet was anonymous.

a report, on the 14th of December, through the medium of Mr. Sheridan, who embraced the occasion, for tracing the rise, progress, and proceedings, of the Loyal Associations, in 1792, which he misrepresented without shame, and condemned without justice. After great professions of regard for the freedom of the press, and with equal feelings of respect, no doubt, for the trial by jury, Mr. Sheridan proposed, that the House, becoming at once *party*, *prosecutor*, and *judge*, should resolve, "That one of the said pamphlets be burned by the hands of the common hangman, in New Palace Yard, at one o'clock on Monday the 21st instant; that another of the said pamphlets be also burned, on Tuesday the 22d instant, at the Royal Exchange, by the common hangman; and that the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex *be directed* to attend, and see the same carried into execution."

He must have been a most inattentive observer, indeed, who has not discovered that the greatest declaimers against tyranny are themselves the greatest tyrants, whenever an opportunity is afforded them for exercising their power. In the present case, Mr. Sheridan exhibited a notable instance of the truth of this position. He thought himself in full possession of the power of directing the authority of the House of Commons; and he proposed to em-

ploy it, in order to crush a most meritorious individual with its weight, whose condemnation he had procured without the smallest attention to that principle of justice, which requires that no man shall be judged without being previously heard in his own defence. He proposed that Mr. Reeves should be ordered to attend at the bar of the House, not to defend himself against a sentence already passed, but to hear that *party, prosecutor,* and *judge,* repeat his sentence, with such comments as would be appropriate to the act; or, in other words, to receive a reprimand from the Speaker. He did not think it necessary that the party accused should be allowed to defend his cause; not to expose the unwarrantable manœuvres of his accusers, in order to pervert facts, to disguise the truth, and to fix on him intentions foreign from his heart; not to impeach their motives, as every person accused has a right to do; nor, to demonstrate his own innocence, either by arguments or evidence, which is a constitutional privilege of which no British subject can be deprived without the most flagrant violation of law and justice; but as he had condemned without hearing, he would proceed to the last office of a judge, and punish also,—for whether, as he insinuated, it was only his intention to get Mr. Reeves's name struck out of the commission,

as a magistrate, or whether, as was at first, most reasonably supposed,* he meant to deprive him of his official situations, as a penalty for his exertions in 1792, it amounted to the assumption of a judicial power, to inflict punishment, without trial; for a man cannot be *tried*, without being present, and without being allowed to speak, or to adduce evidence, in his own defence. He assigned, as a reason for objecting to a prosecution, his wish to *set an example of lenity and mercy*. Mr. Reeves must have a strangely-constructed mind, if he did not consider this assertion as the addition of *insult* to *injury*. At all events, every subsequent declaration from this quarter, expressive of regard for the liberty of the press, or of respect for the trial by jury, could not fail to be considered as—*Verba et voces, prætereaque nihil.*

Mr. Dundas, who had been absent during the former debates, expressed his opinion of this motion, in the most decided and manly terms. He condemned that complication of power which the House were advised to assume.

* Indeed, Mr. Sheridan expressly said, "he submitted to the Ministers themselves, whether this should not be followed up by an address to his Majesty, to remove him from any place of trust." Woodfall's Reports, December 14th, p. 502.

He conceived censure to be more becoming the character of the House than *punishment*. He noticed the swarms of libels which had lately deluged the town; many of which were, in the highest degree, contumacious, and levelled directly at the proceedings of the two Houses of Parliament, though the discerning eyes of Opposition had not taken them into view. In one of the Papers the following paragraph had appeared;—"Last night, the bill for repealing the British Constitution, passed the House of Commons." Suppose Mr. Reeves were to attend that House, how was he to make his defence to evidence which had been already taken *ex parte* upon the subject? How did it accord with the principles of justice, that a man should be brought before a popular assembly, who must, in justice to their own proceedings already had, be allowed to be inflamed against him in some degree? How could he have that impartial audience, which justice required before his case should be decided upon? The question really was—whether the Commons would, in a case in which they themselves were parties, proceed to decide by their own power, or would refer the matter to a trial, by another judicature?—The resolution which passed on a former night, had pronounced the book to be a malicious and seditious libel; no

one, then, could deny, that it was a fit subject for legal inquiry, and that another jurisdiction would, more properly, more soberly, and more temperately, take up the matter than the House. Mr. Dundas observed, that there was not a single topic of accustomed attack, which Mr. Sheridan had not contrived to force into his speech. Mr. Reeves, the Association, Ministers, Judges, Justices, all these were the sports of his invective that night. He need not have taken the trouble to own, that, not the pamphlet, not the supposed author, merely as author, but that Mr. Reeves, the head of the Loyal Associations, was the object of his aversion. There was no one who had the least doubt that Mr. Sheridan's reason, for bringing this charge against Mr. Reeves, was, that he had set those associations on foot. It was superfluous for him, therefore, to confess, that the associations were the true objects of his attack. Every body would give him full credit for the fact, without the proof of his own confession.* Having made many more pointed and pertinent observations on the subject, Mr. Dundas moved, as an amendment—"That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, beseeching his

* Woodfall's Reports, Mr. Dundas's speech, December 14th, p. 504. 506.

Majesty to direct his Attorney-General to prosecute Mr. John Reeves, as author or publisher of the pamphlet; called, 'Thoughts on the English Government;' and the printers of the said pamphlet."

In seconding the motion, Lord Sheffield avowed the most honourable and independent sentiments.—He thought it a loss of time to notice the extraordinary expressions, or episodes, introduced by Mr. Sheridan into his speech; yet he could not but condemn the shameful proposition, of condemning a man before he was proved to be guilty. In opposition to the opinions which had been advanced, his Lordship conceived the House of Commons to be the worst place for passing sentence on the author of an objectionable pamphlet; and he was apprehensive, that his reasons for expressing that opinion would not prove very flattering to either side of the House. He observed one set of men, instead of prosecuting a libel on the Constitution, intent on prosecuting a man whom they considered as having counteracted their views; and, on the other side, he perceived a disposition to shrink from, and withhold, the common protection due to a man, whom it was evidently intended to oppress, although they did not consider him as guilty. —There was but too much truth in these obser-

vations. Mr. Jekyll, however, and Mr. Fox, the former by the most despicable quibbles, and the most shallow sophistry, supported the original motion, for depriving Mr. Reeves of a trial by jury.—But the House overruled the inconsistent arguments of the Whig Party, and, ultimately, adopted Mr. Dundas's amendment, omitting only the proposed prosecution of the printer.

Thus was it decided, by the House of Commons, that a *metaphorical expression* was a fit subject for a criminal prosecution!!! Mr. Reeves was, in consequence, brought to trial, on the twentieth of May following, at Guildhall, when the verdict of the jury negatived the assertion of the House, by finding him *not guilty*.

This discussion forms a kind of epoch in the history of these times, as it served to display the sentiments of Opposition, on the loyal associations; and to shew their disposition to persecute all who opposed their sentiments, and counteracted their views, even at the expence of their own consistency, and by the sacrifice of many of the principles which they had so frequently avowed. By exhibiting, too, the acknowledgment of a party motive, as the ground-work of a criminal process, it supplies a strong confirmation of the opinion of those,

who think judicial powers should never be vested in a popular assembly. The recorded declaration of the House, opposed as it was, by the sentence of a jury, serves still further to strengthen that opinion. The decision of Parliament by no means satisfied the country. The subject was discussed in various tracts, written with considerable ability, in which the principles of Mr. Reeves, and the condemned metaphor, were openly justified. While not one of the Whigs dared take their stand in the field of argument, unprotected by the shield of prejudice, and the armour of Parliament. A second tract was afterwards published, by Mr. Reeves himself,* in vindication of his first, in which he disclaimed all the principles and meaning so perversely imputed to him by the House of Commons.†

* This also was anonymous.

† In this second pamphlet, adverting to the condemned metaphor, Mr. Reeves observes,—" The functions here meant were those which the King can *by law* exercise, and not such as he cannot; what the King can, and not what he cannot do; according to that axiom of our law respecting the regal government, *Rex nihil potest, nisi quod jure potest* But the meaning is explained, fully, by the example of *a recess of Parliament.* ' In our times it does so during every recess of Parliament.' This is so plain an example to controul, and expound, the whole of the metaphor, that I will not add one more syllable upon it." The matter, however, is rendered still more plain, by exhibiting—

" *The passage without the metaphor.*

Posterity will, with difficulty, believe, that the Opposition attempted to justify their prosecution of Mr. Reeves, by the proceedings instituted by the government against persons guilty of treasonable designs to subvert the Constitution. It will not be supposed, that it could possibly have escaped their attention, that the professed object of the persons to whom they alluded, was to overturn the existing order of things, whereas it was the declared object of Mr. Reeves to *preserve it*. While *they* addressed themselves to all the bad passions of the people, with a view to produce a revolution by the means of rebellion, *he* appealed to their *quiet good sense*, pointing out the

" In fine, the government of England is a Monarchy;—the Monarchy is the *Caput, principium, et finis*, of the High Court of Parliament, or *Legislative Council* of the realm, the Lords and Commons, that, at the same time, *reflect dignity on the King, and afford protection to the subject*; but these are still only *a Council*, and derive their origin and *authority from the Monarch*; they may be *dissolved*, and the *King* is a *King* still, *deprived*, indeed, of *this part of his dignity*, but not *loosing his state* like them, *who become private individuals*: The *executive* government may go on in all its functions without Lords or Commons; it has, heretofore, done so for years together; and, in our time, it does so, during every recess of Parliament; but, without the King, his Parliament is no more. The King, therefore, alone it is, who necessarily subsists without change or diminution; and from him alone we *unceasingly* derive the protection of law and government."

excellencies of the existing Constitution, shewing them what reason they had for content and satisfaction, and deprecating every idea of a change. Their measures could only lead to the *destruction* of that Constitution. But, however illogical *his* arguments, however false *his* positions, no mischief could possibly accrue from them, because they went to establish the wisdom and necessity of adherence to the present system, and to expose the folly and danger of innovation. To use his own words:—"All I recommend, and express a wish for, through the whole pamphlet, is, *that the Constitution may remain as it is now by law established.*"

Pending these discussions, some regulations of internal economy, rendered necessary by the peculiar circumstances of the country, were enforced, and others proposed, all having for their object the adoption of means, for either counteracting the immediate effects of the existing scarcity, which had produced great and alarming distress, or for providing against its recurrence. At the very commencement of the Session, Mr. Pitt proposed to renew the act for allowing the importation of corn into the country, duty free. A committee was appointed to inquire into the causes of the scarcity, and to suggest the most appropriate remedies. The members of this committee were most

active in their inquiries, and diligent in their researches; and it was in consequence of their recommendation, that a bounty was proposed on wheat, flour, and Indian-corn, imported; that an act was passed for prohibiting the use of wheat, and of any other grain, in the manufacture of starch; and to put a stop to the distillation of spirit from grain; and that other measures, all tending to the same point, were adopted. Meanwhile, that active spirit of benevolence, which has ever characterized the people of England, was exerted, in every possible way, for alleviating the distresses of the poor; and the efforts of the legislature were laudably seconded by every class of the community.

In providing for the public service of the ensuing year, it was deemed necessary to require one hundred and ten thousand seamen and marines; and two hundred and seven thousand land-forces, of various descriptions. The whole expences of the year were calculated, by Mr. Pitt, when he opened the budget, on the seventh of December, at £27,662,083. 12. 6. and he proposed to raise a loan of eighteen million, in addition to the permanent sources of revenue, in order to meet it. To pay the interest of this sum, which, with the one per cent. for the gradual reduction of the capital, amounted to £1,111,500, he suggested various

new taxes, on collateral succession of landed and personal property; on the assessed taxes, an additional ten per cent.; on horses kept for pleasure; on cart-horses (two shillings each;) on tobacco; and on printed cottons;—and, also, a reduction of discount and waste on salt; and a diminution of the drawback on refined sugars; which he estimated, in the whole, at £1,127,000. The requisite bills for giving legal effect to the proposals of Mr. Pitt, were all passed, through their respective stages, before the close of the year.

After the many debates, which proposals for premature negotiations for peace, introduced by the Opposition, the petitions to the same effect which had been presented to the House of Commons, and the impression which, to a certain extent, had been produced by them on the public mind, facilitated, no doubt, by the the high price of provisions, owing to the failure of the late harvest, Mr. Pitt deemed it necessary to prove the sincerity of his own professions, as to his desire for peace, as soon as any prospect of concluding it, with safety, should occur.—He, therefore, resolved to give to his professions the security of the royal sanction.—For this purpose, a message from the King was presented to the House, on the eighth of December, in which his Majesty

acquainted the House, that the crisis which was depending, at the commencement of the Session, had led to such an order of things in France, as would induce him, conformably with the sentiments which he had already declared, to meet any disposition for negotiation on the part of the enemy, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect, and to conclude a treaty for a general peace, whenever it could be effected on just and suitable terms to himself and his allies. His Majesty further expressed an earnest wish, that the spirit and determination, manifested by Parliament, added to the recent and important successes of the Austrian armies, and to the continued and growing embarrassments of the enemy, might speedily conduce to the attainment of that object, on such grounds as the justice of the cause, in which this country was engaged, and the situation of affairs, might entitle his Majesty to expect.

On the following day this message was taken into consideration. It was natural to suppose, that the Opposition, who had constantly endeavoured to force Ministers to negotiate, whether the enemy would or not, and who represented peace as the panacea for every evil, would have received, with pleasure and satisfaction, this avowal of his Majesty's readi-

ness to treat for peace.—But no!—it was impossible for Ministers to propose any plan, however consonant with the views which their opponents had avowed, which would extort their approbation, or avert their censure. Mr. Pitt moved an address of thanks to his Majesty for his communication, which he thought must meet the unanimous concurrence of the House, and which, therefore, he did not deem it necessary to support with any length of argument. This conciseness, however, gave offence to Mr. Sheridan, who chose to doubt the sincerity of the declaration contained in the message. The reason assigned for his doubt was, the sudden change which had taken place in the Minister's sentiments, and that, too, as he asserted, without any alteration in the state of France.—For, in his estimation, as far as his opinion could be collected from his speech, the existing government of that country was not better than the system adopted under Robespierre.—The address was displeasing to this politician, because it declared the justice of the war on our part, and because it did not disclaim the notion, that there could exist, in any country, any form of government incapable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity.—And so long as this idea was not publicly disavowed by the whole country, (who, he seemed to expect,

were to sacrifice their principles, and their common sense, too, to the sublime notions of the enlightened few, who composed the Opposition,) no secure or permanent peace could be concluded. In conformity with these sentiments, he moved an amendment to the address, in which the House were to express their deep regret, that his Majesty should ever have been advised to consider the internal order of things in France, to be such as not to induce him, at any time, to meet a disposition to negotiation, on the part of the enemy. And the Commons were to state, that they felt themselves, at this conjuncture, more forcibly called on to declare this opinion, because, if the existing order of things in France were admitted as the motive and inducement to negotiation, a change in that order of things might be considered as a ground for discontinuing a negotiation begun, or even for abandoning a treaty concluded.—Therefore, the Commons, duly reflecting on the calamitous waste of treasure, and of blood, to which it was now manifest the acting on this principle had so unfortunately, and so largely, contributed; and, greatly apprehensive of the grievous and ruinous consequences, to which the persevering to act on such principles must inevitably tend, were humbly and earnestly to implore the King, that it might altogether

be abandoned and disclaimed; and that the form of government, or internal order of things, in France, whatever they might be, or should become, might be no bar to a negotiation for restoring the blessings of peace, whenever it could be effected on just and suitable terms. This notable address, in which the House were called upon to belie all the sentiments which they had avowed, and the resolutions which they had adopted, from the very commencement of the war, was to conclude with an intreaty, that his Majesty would give distinct directions for an immediate negotiation to be opened with France.

This amendment was supported only by Mr. Grey and Mr. Fox, whose arguments were confuted, and whose assertions were contradicted, by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, the former of whom entered into a comparative view of the existing government of France, and of those which had preceded it, for the purpose of shewing that peace might safely be concluded with it, if fair terms could be obtained. The sense of the House was so decidedly with the Minister, on this occasion, that Mr. Sheridan did not deem it prudent to press for a division. His amendment was, of course, rejected, and the address carried. A similar address was carried in the House of Lords, with

as little opposition. Earl Fitzwilliam, however, who was absent during the debate, declared his sentiments in opposition to the avowed intention of Ministers for opening a negotiation with the present government of France, which, his Lordship contended, was no better calculated to preserve the relations of peace and amity, than Robespierre and his committee of Public Safety. In his Lordship's opinion, it appeared, that no treaty could be safely concluded with France, without the restoration of the lawful government, which he considered to be the legitimate end of the war.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Sincerity of Mr. Pitt's wish for peace—Character of the New Revolution at Paris—Conduct of its founders, subversive of its leading principle—Means taken to compel the people to re-elect two-thirds of the existing Convention—Motives of such conduct examined—An express article of the New Code violated by the reference of the constitution to the troops for acceptance—The newly-established freedom of the Press employed in exposing the designs of the Convention — No change effected in the conduct of the French towards foreign States—Clamours for peace excited by the Opposition---Their tendency and effects---Mr. Wickham ordered to sound the disposition of the French government, in respect of peace---His communication with Mr. Barthelemi---Motion of Mr. Grey, to compel the Ministers to open a negotiation with the French---Opposed by Mr. Pitt, who adverts to the overtures already ordered to be made by Mr. Wickham---Motion negatived---A principle of negotiation advanced by France, amounting to the assertion of a right to bind Europe by acts of her own legislature---Investigation of this principle---Reply of the British Cabinet to the Note of the Directory---Mr. Pitt proposes a new loan and new taxes---Motion of Mr. Grey brought forward, with a view to the impeachment of Ministers---Mr. Pitt's speech ---Motion rejected by a great majority---Mr. Fox moves a

series of resolutions, condemning the conduct of Ministers ---His speech in support of them---Accuses Ministers of purposely delaying overtures for peace, until they could not be accepted by the French---Pleads the cause of France with great zeal and ability---Censures the instructions given to Mr. Wickham, and justifies the objections of the Directory---The inconsistency and weakness of his arguments exposed---He insists on the necessity of a change of Ministers; but declares, that he never will accept of a place himself, without a retractation of all the leading principles and maxims which had been adopted by the government and the House---Mr. Pitt answers him —Declares that peace has been his constant wish, and that the war has interfered with all his favourite plans of economy and finance---Comments on the inconsistency of Mr. Fox---Explains the difference between himself and Mr. Burke, respecting the object of the war---Confutes Mr. Fox's charge of insincerity, in the attempt to open a negotiation for peace---Resolutions negatived by 216 votes against 42—Parliament dissolved—Military operations on the Continent—Renewal of hostilities on the Rhine—Amount of the respective forces of the Austrians and French, at the opening of the campaign—Object of the French, on the invasion of Germany—Battle on the Sieg—Battle of Altenkirchen—Retreat of the Austrians ---The Archduke Charles joins the army, defeats the French, and drives them back behind the Lahn---General Kray, with 11,000 men, beats 25,000 French, under Kleber---The French retreat to Dusseldorf---Operations on the Upper Rhine---Wurmser detached to Italy with 30,000 men---Superiority of the French---Moreau takes the fort of Kehl—Cowardice of the Suabian troops— Moreau crosses the Rhine, and enters Germany, with 80,000 men---Defeats the Austrians under Latour, on the Murg---The Archduke takes the command of the troops on

the Upper Rhine---Battle of Ettlingen---Retreat of the Imperialists---Battle of Mettingen---The French advance into, Bavaria---Masterly plan of the Archduke---He marches against Jourdan's army---Jourdan retreats---The Archduke prevents his junction with Moreau---Defeats him at Kornach---Jourdan's army is dispersed, and driven beyond the Rhine---Operations on the Danube---Moreau defeated---Peace between France and Bavaria---Moreau retreats---Displays great skill and ability---Imprudent conduct of the Austrian Generals---The French re-cross the Rhine---Siege and recapture of Fort Kehl by the Austrians---Campaign in Italy---Relative forces of the Belligerent powers---Battles of Montenotte and Montelezino, Dego, and Vico---Retreat of the Allies---Peace between France and Sardinia---Retreat of the Austrians---The French cross the Po---Battle of Lodi—The French pass the Mincio—Enter Leghorn—Besiege Mantua—Wurmser arrives in Italy—Siege of Mantua raised—Austrians defeated in various actions—Wurmser retreats into the Tyrol—Battle of Rovoredo—Action at Bassano—Wurmser arrives at Mantua—Peace between Naples and France—A fresh army of Austrians, under Generals Alvinzy and Davidovich enter Italy—Battle of Fonteviva—Battle of Arcole, and retreat of Alvinzy---Battle near Verona---Defeat of the Austrians at Rivoli and Corona---They retreat into the Tyrol---Mantua surrendered to the French ---Peace between France and the Pope---Termination of the campaign---Examination into the causes of the defeat of the Austrians, and the success of the French---Treachery of the Austrian officers---Falsehood of Buonaparte's reports to the Directory---Loss of either army during the campaign—Impolitic restrictions imposed on the Austrian Commanders, by the Aulic Council of War—Evil effects of such a system.

[1796.] The intimation given in the King's speech, at the opening of the session, that the period was fast approaching when security might be derived from a treaty of peace concluded with the new government of France, was not loosely thrown out for the purpose of deceiving Parliament, or the public, with false hopes.—It resulted from the sincerest wish, on the part of the Minister, to put an end to the war, the moment peace could be procured, without the sacrifice of honour, interest, or safety. If, indeed, all the circumstances of the last revolution at Paris,—for a revolution that event must certainly be called, which destroyed the existing system of government, and introduced another of a different form and structure in its place,—were to be duly considered, very little foundation would be found to have existed, at this period, for any sanguine hopes of a material change in the views and policy of the Directorial Government. It was true, indeed, as Mr. Pitt had stated, that the species of *liberty* and *equality*, which had constituted the basis of the revolutionary system, had been abandoned, and that those engines of destruction, *affiliated* Societies of Jacobins, had been proscribed, by the new code, which contained nothing, on the face of it, essentially hostile to the rights and tranquillity of other states.

But here ended all the advantages of the late revolution. It rescued, indeed, the wretched people of France from the sanguinary despotism of Robespierre; but it afforded them no other improvement or relief. The new code held out, to be sure, prospects and plans more compatible with the civil liberty of the subject, than the dreadful system of terror by which it had been preceded. But the conduct of those who framed it belied the hopes which it encouraged, and the benefits which it promised. They had avowed the principle, that liberty is only to be found in a REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, the basis of which is FREEDOM OF ELECTION; and on such principle they professed to form their new constitution. But, having formed it, the first step they took was a violation of this very principle, which they had so solemnly, and so publicly, consecrated. The period prescribed by the law, for the duration of the legislative body, expired in the autumn of 1795; the people were then to reassume those rights, which they had delegated, for a given time, for the purpose of granting them to new representatives; and the full exercise of these rights was the more necessary, at that important epoch, as they had loudly and repeatedly expressed their disapprobation of their present representatives, and had pro-

claimed them to be unworthy of farther confidence. The legislative body were very well acquainted with this disposition of their constituents, and entertained a just dread of the consequences of an appeal to them. They well knew that they had very little chance of being re-elected; and, *therefore*, they secretly resolved, to retain possession of their seats, which not only secured an extensive influence, but (which was of infinitely greater importance to numbers of them) an ample means of subsistence, which they knew not where else to procure. They made no scruple to sacrifice the constitution, which they had just held out as a master-piece of political wisdom, and as the only source of national happiness and prosperity, to the attainment of this sordid and interested object. Hence sprang those two decrees, already noticed, which stand without a parallel in the annals of legislative tyranny, and by which the people were compelled to re-elect two-thirds of the existing legislature; while efficacious measures were also adopted for securing the return of a considerable part of the remaining third. So flagrant a violation of their own principles, so daring an act of oppression, was too palpable, in its tendency, to escape exposure, and too comprehensive in its scope to elude resistance. But, as the nation had

been kept, for three years, in a state of passive submission to the most absolute, oppressive, and unlimited power, by the Convention itself, its members were led to hope that, by the joint aid of deception, seduction, and threats, judiciously applied, they might secure even this desperate attempt against all opposition from the people. For this purpose they annexed their two decrees to the constitutional code, all discussion of which had been forbidden by the Convention, who only presented it to the people for their pure and unconditional acceptance, in the hope that, through the general prevalence of ignorance and fear, they might be confounded with the constitution itself, which they imagined would be eagerly received, as a comparative refuge from that odious system of terror and of anarchy, under which the nation had so long groaned. The Convention took special care not to separate the two decrees from the constitutional articles, nor yet to submit them, by an express and particular resolution, to the sanction of the primary assemblies, that they might become the subject of a different discussion, and of a distinct and separate consent. As the artifice, however, was too gross to impose upon the inhabitants of the great towns, and as the public indignation, which had been manifested at the crimes of the

Convention, might naturally be expected there to burst forth with greater force and energy, care was taken to surround them with troops. The primary assemblies of Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Rouen, Toulouse, and many other places, held their deliberations in the midst of bayonets, and under the eyes of a political missionary, deputed by the Convention, with orders to employ force, in case intrigue, threats, and corruption, should prove inadequate to procure the desired consent. Another means to which they had recourse, for the same purpose, was the general liberation of all the agents of terror, who had been imprisoned as soon as their employers ceased to have occasion for their services. These men were sent to the primary assemblies, in order to promote the adoption of the two decrees, which would secure impunity both to themselves and to their employers. Lastly, in violation of both the spirit and the letter of the new constitution, which expressly declared, that *the army is essentially an obedient body, which can, in no case whatever, deliberate*, they decreed, that the constitutional code, accompanied by their two favourite decrees, should be presented to the troops for their acceptance, in order that if, in spite of all these precautions, they should be rejected by the primary assemblies, they might

involve the people in hostilities with the army, and, in a paroxysm of despair, create a civil war, rather than give up their authority, like those base tyrants who dishonoured the throne of the Cæsars, who courted the suffrages of the legions, when they were afraid that the votes of the Roman Senate, and the people, would be adverse to their hopes. Thus every artifice was exerted for the accomplishment of their purpose, for keeping the reins of power in their blood-stained hands. Such good use, however, was made of the newly-proclaimed freedom of the press, that the eyes of the nation were opened to their designs; and the general disapprobation of the decrees was pretty loudly and openly expressed. To obviate the ill effects of this hostile impression, the Convention did not wait till all the primary assemblies had sent the result of their deliberations,—until a clear and decisive majority of the nation had given or refused their consent to the two decrees,—but rejected the votes of those who had unanimously condemned them. They declared, that they were accepted by a majority of the people; though the declaration was so clumsily worded, and contained so many obvious inaccuracies and errors, that it afforded the strongest presumption that the decrees had been rejected by the greater number.*

* "The Convention had promised and decreed," says an

As there was but little ground for satisfaction in this event, in its tendency to improve the situation of the people, so was there but little reason to hope that it would be productive of any material change in the foreign policy of the French government. The reins of power had, indeed, passed from the hands of Robespierre and his bosom friends; but they were placed in the hands of men who had abetted most of his

attentive observer of the whole of this transaction, and an eye witness of their conduct, "that the documents, that is, the list of Primary Assemblies, with the number of voters who had accepted or rejected the two decrees, on which their committee had founded their report, should be printed; and this would the best means of imposing silence on all who questioned the accuracy of the report. They did not hesitate, however, to break this promise, although their honor was so deeply concerned in its fulfilment. But, after having myself ascertained the fact, in the Electoral Assembly, of which I was a member, that three-fourths of the Primary Assemblies, in my department, had voted against the re-election of two-thirds of the Convention, and that the remaining third had taken no notice of it, excepting about a score who had approved it, I ceased to be astonished at the silence of the Convention, and could not forbear to admire their discretion. I have not a doubt but that a similar verification took place in all the Electoral Assemblies, and that the result was every where nearly the same.

A Cursory Review of the transactions of the 13th Vendemiaire, (5th of October, 1795) and of their effects. Translated from the French. Note to p. 7.

sanguinary measures, and who were almost, if not wholly, as guilty as himself. It was not to be expected that such men would pursue a different system of policy in regard to foreign powers, however necessary they might feel it, as well for their own safety,—which, be it observed, was the sole consideration by which they were influenced in their opposition to Robespierre,—as from a regard to the public feeling, to render their internal government rather more compatible with the happiness, the welfare, and the personal security of the people.

Still Mr. Pitt was willing to give them credit for a more pacific disposition than their predecessors had displayed; and was most anxious that an early manifestation of it should afford him the much wished-for opportunity of opening a negotiation for peace. But he well knew that any premature disclosure of his own wish would only serve to postpone the period of its accomplishment. On the other hand, the Opposition, and their friends out of Parliament, spared no pains to increase the clamour for peace, which they had originally excited. They could not, however, but be sensible, that nothing could tend more strongly to indispose our enemies to accede to such terms as would be consistent with the honour

and safety of this country, than the manifestation of an ungovernable desire for peace, on the part of the people. In proportion to the warmth of that desire would the exorbitancy of their demands, most naturally, increase. Besides, a nation, which has peace ever uppermost in its thoughts, and makes it the constant subject of its discourse, is not likely to display much vigour in the pursuit of a war. It is one thing to entertain a sincere wish to make peace, and a resolution to conclude it, whenever it can be made, on honourable terms; and another, to be incessantly talking of peace, and to be loud in expressing our anxious desire to obtain it. To be tumultuous for peace is to put a fresh weapon into the hand of our enemy, with the aid of which he may, without a struggle, wrest from us all the conquests, and all the advantages, which we have gained from him by the sword.—It is a strong symptom of a mean and cowardly disposition, of a low and selfish mind, without spirit or fortitude, to bear the pressure and burdens of war, and to submit to those privations and sacrifices which are necessary for the attainment of its essential and laudable object. Where this anxiety is manifested, without any symptoms of a corresponding desire, on the part of the enemy, it sinks still lower, in the scale of mental degene-

racy, from meanness to imbecility; since it removes, to an incalculable distance, the prospect of peace;—it blunts our own sword, while it sharpens the sword of the foe. It was truly remarked, by one of the most acute and intelligent observers of the rise, progress, and consequences, of the French Revolution, that the government of that country placed a great reliance, for the success of their schemes, "on that longing after peace, proclaimed even on the first day of the war, which is a symptom of the failure of all courage, of all reason, of all public spirit,—propagated with indefatigable industry, and in the clamours for which the conspirators, the factious, the revolutionists, of all countries join, echoing the sentiments of the egotists, and of those nations which have not had the fortitude to defend themselves."*

Wisely, most wisely, has the constitution of England placed the power of peace and war in the hands of the Crown; and made it the imperative duty of the Ministers of the Crown to exercise it, to the best of their discretion, without temerity, and without fear; not to plunge us into war, hastily, intemperately, or unnecessarily, on the one hand; nor to be led by popular clamour, and factious discontent,

* Letter to a Minister of State, by Mallet du Pan.

on the other hand, to solicit a premature negotiation, or to conclude an insecure and inadequate peace.—It is for the Minister, who can alone be acquainted with all the facts and circumstances which ought to influence his conduct on such a momentous concern, to fix the proper time for making advances to an enemy; and to prescribe the conditions which the interests of the country may require, and the relative state of the contending parties may authorize him to exact. If he suffer himself to be betrayed into the adoption of a measure of such importance contrary to his own judgment, he virtually surrenders the Royal Prerogative, and resigns the reins of power into the hands of the governed, thereby destroying the very principle and object of government.—Government is bound to restrain the headlong passions of the people, and to reduce them, by the proper exercise of legal authority, to a state of subjection to their real interests. Without the possession of the means of forming a correct judgment, and, too often, without the ability to form it, particularly where the pressure, which a regard for those interests requires, is immediate and certain; while the object which is to give them a permanent security is distant and precarious; the Ministers of the Crown are the guardians

and guides which the constitution has provided to inform and to direct them.

On the present occasion, the means adopted, in the King's speech, at the opening of the session, for apprizing the new government of France, that the great impediment to the conclusion of a peace, which had hitherto subsisted, was removed, was sufficient to draw forth from them some avowal, or manifestation, of a pacific disposition, if any such existed.—And it was the more necessary that such an avowal should come from them, as the preceding governments had, on various occasions, declared their determination never to make peace, but upon such terms as were utterly incompatible with the security, and even the independence, of other states; and, therefore, without some declaration of sentiment on this subject, it might, and indeed must, be inferred, that they were resolved to adhere to the same principles, and to pursue the same system of foreign policy. But neither this, nor any other of the leading considerations which have been urged above, could have the smallest influence on the minds of the Opposition;—could produce the smallest relaxation in their efforts to engender, in the public, the same lust for peace which raged within their own bosoms; or could effect the smallest change in their Parliamentary

conduct. But Mr. Pitt did not stop even here; he did not wait for a voluntary manifestation of a pacific disposition on the part of the French government; he took direct and active means for ascertaining whether such a disposition really existed, through the medium of Mr. Wickham, the British Minister in Switzerland. Before, however, those means could be carried into effect, the Opposition, with as little regard to the character of the country, as solicitude for the success of the object which they professed to have in view, resolved again to render peace the subject of discussion in Parliament. Accordingly, on the fifteenth of February, Mr. Grey brought forward a motion for an address to the King, stating the desire of the House, that he would be pleased to take such steps, as to his wisdom should appear most proper, for communicating directly, to the executive government of the French republic, his readiness to meet any disposition to negotiation, on their part, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect. It was the avowed object of this motion to extort from the British government a direct and unconditional acknowledgment of the French republic; and to compel Ministers to make the first overtures for peace.

The motion was resisted by Mr. Pitt,

principally on the grounds of unnecessary and undue interposition with the Constitutional prerogative of the Crown, and of its direct tendency to prevent the conclusion of a just and equitable peace. He informed the House, that Ministers had already adopted every measure consistent with the general interests of the country, and with the attention and regard due to her allies, to enable his Majesty to take any opportunity, either to meet overtures for negotiation, or to make such overtures as might be found most expedient. That no etiquette, with respect to who should make the first overture,—no difficulty in finding a mode of making it, would be considered, by government, as an obstacle to negotiation, if, in other respects, there should appear to be a probability of its leading to just and honourable terms,—the great point being, what prospect there was of obtaining such terms. Measures had been taken for ascertaining these points, and were then in train; and, if the enemy were sincere, they must speedily lead to a negotiation.—Whether such negotiation would end in peace, he could not say, because that depended on the inclination of the enemy to open it with a view to a peace, to be concluded on terms very different from any which their public declarations had, for a long time past, seemed to

indicate; if they had no such inclination, a speedy peace was impossible. He wished ardently for peace, but only for an honourable peace;—such a peace the country had a right to expect from its own strength and resources, and from a knowledge of the relative situation of France.

This acknowledgment ought to have deterred Mr. Grey from pressing his motion upon the House, and must have deterred him, if his only object had been to pave the way for a pacific negotiation with France; but as he had those other objects in view, which have been stated above, he persisted in his measure, and, supported by Mr. Fox, pressed it to a division, when it was negatived by one hundred and eighty-nine votes against fifty.

Mr. Pitt, however, continued to pursue the measures to which he had alluded to in this debate, for ascertaining the real disposition of the Directorial government, in regard to peace. Early in March, in pursuance of his instructions, Mr. Wickham, the British Minister in Switzerland, applied to Mr. Barthelemi, the French Ambassador at Berne, to know,—I. Whether there was a disposition in France to open a negotiation with his Majesty, and his Allies, for the re-establishment of a general peace, upon just and suitable terms, by sending,

for that purpose, ministers to a congress, at such place as might thereafter be agreed upon? —II. Whether there existed a disposition to communicate to him the general grounds of a pacification, such as France would be willing to propose, in order that his Majesty, and his Allies, might thereupon examine, in concert, whether they were such as might serve as the foundation of a negotiation for peace?—III. Or, whether there would be a desire to propose any other way whatever, for arriving at the same end,—that of a general pacification?*

After an interval of nearly three weeks,† Mr. Barthelemi communicated the answer of the Executive Directory, which professed to contain an exposition of their sentiments and dispositions. In this they expressed an ardent desire to procure, for the French republic, a just, honourable, and solid peace; but declared that the satisfaction which they should have derived from Mr. Wickham's communication, was considerably damped by the circumstance of his not being vested with powers to open a negotiation, which led them to doubt the sincerity of the pacific intentions of the British Court. They chose to consider a congress, though

* See Mr. Wickham's Note of March 8, 1796.

† Mr. Barthelemi's Note of March the 26th.

sanctioned by the prescription of ages, as the best mode of adjusting the differences of contending powers, and of leading to a fair and solid peace, as calculated only to render all negotiation useless; and to regard, therefore, the proposal for holding it, as another proof of the insincerity of the British Cabinet; and as a mark of their bad faith. After some other preliminary observations in the same strain, now first adopted in a diplomatic correspondence, they proceeded to exhibit a proof of their own ardent desire for peace, by an explicit declaration, that, being charged by the constitution with the execution of the laws, they could neither make, nor listen to, any proposal contrary to them;—the Constitutional Act did not permit them to consent to any alienation of that which, according to the existing laws, constituted the territory of the Republic. But that, in respect of the countries occupied by the French armies, and which had not been united to France, they, as well as other interests, political and commercial, might become the subject of a negotiation, which would present to the Directory the means of proving how much they had at heart the attainment of a speedy peace.

Here the monstrous principle was asserted, that the French Republic had a right to legislate for Europe;—for her laws were now set up

as paramount to the established law of nations, to the most just claims of particular States, and to the national independence of others. In pursuance of this novel principle, the French had only to pour their murderous hordes into the territories of a neutral state, (as they had already done) conquer it by their arms, and then annex it for ever, by an act of their legislature, to their republic, one and indivisible;—and any claim for its restoration must be treated as inadmissible, because involving a proposal for violating the laws of France. Here the views of aggrandizement and conquest, which the leaders of the revolution had early manifested, in violation of their own alledged principle of forbearance and renunciation, were clearly unfolded; and it distinctly appeared, that whatever might be the fate of war, the new rulers of France would make no peace, which had not for its basis the restoration of every conquest made upon themselves, and the retention by them of every place and country which they had wrested from their enemies. It required an effrontery, possessed by no regular government, to proclaim to the world a principle so preposterous; a claim so monstrous; a principle which, if acted upon by every power engaged in a war,—and the power which first asserted such a principle, could not deny

the right of another to adopt and pursue it, would produce an endless scene of carnage, and render peace impracticable.

In reply to this exposition, it was observed, that the British Court saw, with regret, how far the tone and spirit of the answer of the Directory, the nature and extent of the demands which it contained, and the manner of announcing them, were remote from any disposition for peace.—The inadmissible pretension had been avowed, of appropriating to France all that the laws actually existing there might have comprized, under the denomination of French territory. Annexed to this demand was an express declaration, that no proposal contrary to it would be made, or even listened to; and this, under the pretence of an internal regulation, the provisions of which were wholly foreign to all other nations. So long as such dispositions were persisted in by the French government, nothing was left for the King but to prosecute a war equally just and necessary. But, whenever his enemies should manifest more pacific sentiments, his Majesty would, at all times, be eager to concur in them, by lending himself, in concert with his Allies, to all such measures as should be best calculated to re-establish general tranquillity, on conditions just, honourable, and permanent, either by the establish-

ment of a congress, which had been so often, and so happily, the means of restoring peace to Europe; or by a preliminary discussion of the principles which might be proposed, on either side, as the foundation of a general pacification; or, lastly, by an impartial examination of any other way, which might be pointed out to him, for arriving at the same salutary end.*

By this explanation, the nation no longer had to rely on the representations of either Ministers or their Opponents, or even on the declarations of the members of the French legislature, for a knowledge of the real intentions, and decided object, of the Directorial government, on the long-agitated question of peace. The Minister had given the most positive proof of the sincerity of his declaration, that the form of government in France would no longer be considered as an obstacle to negotiation, and had reduced the matter to a simple question of terms. Though, even had England been so depressed as to accede to the exorbitant terms suggested by the enemy, still it would have been a subject of very serious consideration, how far, by such a concession, she would be justified in recognizing the arbitrary principle on which those terms were founded.

* See *note of observation*, dated Downing Street, April 10, 1796.

The public expences having proved greater than had been expected, Mr. Pitt found it necessary, in the month of April, to raise a new loan of seven millions and a half, one-third of which was necessary to defray the additional charges in the departments of the army and ordnance, including the expence of barracks, up to the close of the present year. The remaining two-thirds were to be applied to the purchase of navy and exchequer bills, (which it was proposed to fund) and to the re-payment to the bank of one million, which had been advanced to the government in exchequer bills. This loan had been raised on very favourable terms; the persons who advanced the money having taken the stock at the full market price of the day, with a direct *bonus* of less than two per cent. which, being added to the usual discount for prompt payment, would make the whole benefit three pounds, six shillings, and three pence per cent. The interest of this sum amounted to £575,000, to which was to be added £135,000, being the estimated amount of the produce of the tax on printed cottons, which it was deemed expedient to repeal, making a total of £710,000 to be provided. To meet this demand, Mr. Pitt proposed to raise, by a new duty on hats, £100,000; by a tax upon dogs, £40,000; and, by an

additional duty upon wine of twenty pounds a ton, £600,000. In the discussions which followed these proposals, many arguments were used, tending to impeach the accuracy of the Minister's calculations; and many specimens of wit were exhibited, calculated, and designed, to gratify the Speakers, and to amuse the House. The House, however, afforded their sanction to his statements; and to the measures which he proposed, and the bills which he introduced, for giving them effect, were adopted by large and decisive majorities.

As it was generally understood that Parliament would separate early in the season, and that it would be dissolved in the course of the summer; the leaders of the Opposition resolved not to suffer the interval to elapse without again endeavouring to excite a public odium against the Ministers. They seem, indeed, to have had so little knowledge of the duty of a representative, as to have adopted the idea that it consisted solely in making incessant attempts to disgrace the Members of Administration by the foulest aspersions on their characters, and to fetter the operations of government, by a systematic opposition to all their measures.—No men, certainly, could have been more solicitous to discharge such a duty, than the present chiefs of the Whig-party; who, careless of the

means, and anxious only about the *end*, displayed the most indefatigable perseverance in the pursuit of their object.

In conformity with this principle of action, Mr. Grey brought forward, on the sixth of May, a string of resolutions, for the avowed purpose of supplying a basis for the impeachment of Ministers. The charge from which so serious an inference was to be drawn, was the appropriation of public money to one object, which had been specifically voted for another. This charge was fully met by Mr. Pitt, who admitted the fact to a certain extent, but justified the departure from the strict letter of the act of appropriation, by the example of almost every administration in every war since the revolution, and by the imperative exigencies of the public service. The resolutions were supported, of course, by Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan, but the previous question, moved by Mr. Steele, was carried by 200 votes against 38.—The last effort of this kind, during the session, was made by Mr. Fox, four days after this debate. On that occasion, he took a view of the origin and progress of the war; of the conduct and policy of Ministers; and of the motives and principles which he alledged to have actuated them in all their public proceedings. He delivered a very able and masterly speech,

highly sophistical indeed, but much more temperate than usual. He pleaded the cause of the French with considerable art; impeached, like them, the sincerity of Ministers in their professions of a pacific disposition; and improved upon the objections started by the Directory, to the mode adopted of ascertaining their sentiments, respecting a general peace.—As one decisive proof of their insincerity, in his mind, he instanced the delay which had occurred between the King's message of the eighth of December, and the first note from Mr. Wickham to Mr. Barthelemi, on the eighth of March, an interval of three months. He contended, that, at the very outset of even an attempt to negotiate, the Ministers should have made a full and unequivocal recognition of the French Republic! And, forgetting, that the object of Ministers was to ascertain, in the first instance, whether the French were really disposed to treat,—and be it recollected, that there was the greatest reason to believe, from all the public declarations of the leading men in France, and from the whole of their conduct, from the deposition and murder of their Sovereign to the present moment, that there existed no such disposition in the French government,—he condemned them for not having given full powers to Mr. Wickham to negotiate a treaty. Never

was an argument so weak as this to prove the insincerity of Ministers;—it might become, indeed, the shuffling and equivocating members of the French Directory to use it, in order to deceive the credulous multitude whom they governed; but it was wholly unworthy so acute and able a politician as Mr. Fox.—If the Directory had, in answer to Mr. Wickham's application, declared, generally, that they were ready to treat with England, and her Allies, so soon as proper persons should be appointed for that purpose, vested with the usual powers; or had stated, more particularly, some one of the usual grounds on which nations are accustomed to treat with each other; and any unnecessary delay had taken place, on the part of the British Ministers, in carrying their avowed intention into effect, by appointing a minister to conduct the negotiation, there would, indeed, have existed good reason for impeaching their sincerity. But it would have been the height of folly to appoint a Minister Plenipotentiary before they knew whether the French would consent to negotiate on any admissible terms, or even whether they would receive him at all. It would have exposed the representative of our Sovereign to be treated with contempt, by rebels and regicides, and have subjected the nation to the greatest insult which could have been offered to her; it would have

dishonoured and degraded her in the eyes of Europe.

Having assumed facts which had no real existence, Mr. Fox proceeded to draw from them his own conclusions. He justified the assertion of the French Directory, that the pretended offers of the British Ministers were produced by the pressure of circumstances, and made with a view rather of continuing, than of concluding, the war. He admitted, that the pretence set up by the French, that they could not restore any territory which had been consolidated with the republic was unjust; but it did not produce its natural effect, by opening his eyes to the insatiate ambition, and destructive views, of the French rulers: it only served to increase his indignation against the ministers, who, he affirmed, had brought us into this lamentable situation, who had deferred any proposition for peace till a period when the difficulties were such, that *there was no prospect of obtaining it on safe and honourable terms.*— Their object was to delay overtures of peace, till *they could not be accepted*, and they had succeeded.*

No change had certainly taken place in

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports, May 10, 1796, p. 487.

the affairs of Europe, since the delivery of the King's Message, in December; of course, nothing had occurred since to raise those difficulties, which, according to Mr. Fox, rendered a safe and honourable peace impracticable.—The same difficulties, then, must have existed at that period. Yet Mr. Fox, in his speech on the Message, used every argument which his reason could suggest, to urge Ministers to enter into an immediate negotiation for peace.*—Nay, so impatient was he of all delay, in opening a negotiation, however necessary, that he returned to the charge on the 15th of February, and enforced the same arguments with additional energy. He then expressed his conviction, that this country might obtain from France honourable terms of peace.† "The Governors of France," said he, "dare not refuse any reasonable terms which we may offer; or, if they do, others will soon be appointed in their places, who will dare to accept of them."—But he was persuaded, that if a disposition to peace, on our part, was made known to France, *her concessions would be as ample as we could wish.*

Our disposition to peace had unquestion-

* Idem. December 9, p. 369.

† Ibid. February 15, p. 87.

ably been made sufficiently known to France, whose public papers noticed our parliamentary proceedings on the Royal Message; and, had any doubt still remained, the overture made by the Ministers, through the medium of Mr. Wickham, must have effectually removed it; for, whatever faction may invent, or party assert, one nation does not ask another to propose a basis for a negotiation without being previously disposed to negotiate herself. Mr. Fox, then, must either have urged the Ministers to negotiate at a time when he believed there existed insuperable difficulties in the way of a safe and honourable peace; in which case, he must have belied the sentiments of his own heart, and have spoken against the conviction of his own mind; or he must have now admitted, that the difficulties which he stated to exist at present, arose out of the ungovernable ambition of the French rulers; for, certainly, between the period at which the King's Message was delivered, and between the fifteenth of February, and the eighth of March, Ministers had made no one declaration, had performed no one act, which could raise a difficulty which did not exist before, or which could afford even a pretext to the French Directory, for increasing the exorbitancy of their demands.—Yet, as Mr. Fox asserted that Ministers had

purposely delayed overtures of peace *till they could not be accepted;* and as he had maintained, only three weeks before they were made, that they would be met by ample concessions on the part of France, it followed, of course, that something must have intervened between the fifteenth of February, and the eighth of March, to render it impossible for the French to accept our pacific overtures. This *something*, which had eluded the vigilance of every political observer, it behoved him to produce, as the only means of justifying his own assertion, and of exempting him from the imputation of hypocrisy and falsehood. At all events, the conduct of France, having been so totally different from that which he had most confidently predicted it would be, should, at least, have produced the salutary effect of moderating the strength of his affirmations, of tempering the violence of his zeal, and of weakening his reliance on his own judgment, on all subjects connected with the affairs of that country, and the principles and disposition of her rulers.

The only remedy which Mr. Fox could suggest, for all the varied calamities into which the country was plunged, was a total change, not only in the councils of his Majesty, but in his counsellors. This he represented as an act

of imperious necessity, since it was absurd to suppose, *after their recent conduct*, that they had abandoned those principles of action which had produced so many misfortunes. They had not, in any way, manifested such a change.*—The only instance of their recent conduct, which could have drawn down, on the heads of Ministers, this heavy censure, was the adoption of a measure which Mr. Fox, himself, had always most strenuously insisted upon,—the manifestation of a disposition to treat with the present government of France,—and which he had specifically declared to be a proof of the change which he now so peremptorily stated not to have taken place. In the debate on the message, on the 9th of December, he opened his speech with a declaration, that there was one thing which must give him pleasure—*he must congratulate the House, and the Country, on the complete change which had happily taken place in the language, and in the system, of government.*† It would appear, then, that, though Mr. Fox so confidently inferred this change from the declaration of his Majesty, of the eighth of December, that such a state of things had actually occurred in France, as would induce him

* Woodfall's Reports, May 10, p. 488.

† Ibid. December 9, p. 265.

to meet any disposition to peace, on the part of the French rulers,—the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers, in the March following, in taking means, in pursuance of that declaration, for ascertaining whether such a disposition did really exist, supplied him with a proof, that the change which he had triumphantly proclaimed in December, had not yet occurred.

In order to obviate a conclusion, which might very naturally be drawn from his avowal, that nothing but a change of measures, and of men, could save the country, he declared, that his return to power was entirely out of the question. The maxims which had been adopted, and acted upon, in the course of the present war, and the principles which were then countenanced, made it altogether impossible for him to aspire to any situation of responsibility. Those maxims and principles must be all retracted and reversed, the two late acts, which he continued to think subversive of the constitution, repealed, and the precedent declared to be pernicious; and there must be a full and perfect conviction in his Majesty's mind, and in that of the people,—that all these measures were wrong, before men, who loved and venerated the constitution, could think of holding any public situation.

These, and all the sentiments which, on

the various topics which his speech embraced, he had, at different times, promulgated, had been reduced into the form of resolutions which he now proposed to the House to adopt; although, by so doing, they would act in contradiction to their recorded opinions. Mr. Pitt condemned, under the present circumstances of the country, all retrospective inquiries as useless and dangerous; though he briefly exposed the gross inaccuracies of Mr. Fox's statement, relative to past transactions, and to the imputed sentiments and conduct of Ministers. At the periods to which Mr. Fox alluded, when he charged him with having neglected opportunities of making peace, he declared, that every motive of public duty, and every consideration of personal ease, had induced him to exert the best of his endeavours to promote a peace, by which alone his favourite object of the redemption of the national debt, and other financial projects, which he had much at heart, could be promoted. The failure was owing entirely to the enemy. He commented on the inconsistency of Mr. Fox, who wished him to go to war to prevent the partition of Poland; when Mr. Fox had resisted, to the utmost, his attempts to prevent the dismemberment of Turkey, though *those attempts had, for their object, to prevent that very partition of Poland* which was

now so much inveighed against.* Mr. Pitt complained of having the warm and unguarded expressions of individuals adopted as the declarations of the Ministers themselves. Thus many things, which had fallen from that great man, Mr. Burke, had since been stated as the solemn decisions of government; though it was known that, to a certain extent, there was a difference between the Ministers and that gentleman, on the object of the war. That Ministers wished to treat with a government in which jacobin principles should not prevail, that they wished for a government from which they could hope for security, and that they thought a monarchy the most likely *form* of government to afford them these advantages, was, most undoubtedly, true; but that Ministers ever had an idea of continuing the war for the purpose of establishing the old government of France, with all its abuses, he solemnly denied.

The charge of insincerity, in the overtures lately made to the French Directory, through Mr. Wickham, which Mr. Fox had pressed very strongly on the House, was examined, by Mr. Pitt, with great minuteness. On the inference drawn from the length of the interval which

* Woodfall's Reports, May 10th, p. 498.

was suffered to elapse between the King's message and Mr. Wickham's first note, it was remarked, that no intention had been expressed, by the British government, to be the first in making proposals for opening a negotiation. The fair construction, and obvious purport, of the message, went no further than to invite the enemy to make the first advances, if they were so disposed, and to shew that no obstacle would be opposed, on our part, to the capacity of the government which they had chosen to negotiate terms with this country. Further than this the Ministers had not gone; and, therefore, whatever the wishes of certain persons might have led them to expect, there was no room for disappointment, and no ground for censure, afforded by their forbearance to go further.

The insincerity of the overtures at Basil had also been inferred from the supposed want of co-operation with our allies.—The Opposition, however, were as much mistaken in their facts as they were in their inferences; for the overtures were not made without previous communication with our allies, and we acted in concert with them, though they were not formally made parties to the proposal, a ceremony which was considered as wholly superfluous.

As to the imputed insincerity arising out of the non-recognition of the republic, it was remarked to be truly generous in Mr. Fox to find out an objection for the French which they had not discovered themselves.—In the answer of the Directory to the British note, not the least notice had been taken of this circumstance. It was evident, therefore, that *they* laid no stress on the omission; that *they* regarded it as no insult. But Mr. Fox always displayed great sensibility on the point of recognition, and seemed to have it very much at heart. He had even asserted, that, if this mark of attention and respect had been paid to the French government, it would have induced them, in return, to propose more moderate terms; but he was singular in an opinion for which he had no foundation whatever; and he must be aware, too, that the mere proposal to treat in itself implied a recognition of the authority of the party with whom the treaty was to be concluded.

It had been alledged, as a farther proof of insincerity, that we did not propose terms to the enemy, while we called upon them to propose terms to us.—But, as the application did not come from the enemy, but had been made by the British Cabinet, it would have been ridiculous to propose any particular terms until

they were previously informed whether the French were disposed to treat at all.—Again, it had been urged, that we must have been insincere, since the Minister, who was employed to make the overture, was not authorized to negotiate. But Mr. Pitt remarked, that it was extraordinary indeed, that such an observation should come from any one who professed to have the slightest knowledge of diplomatic proceedings; and he asked Mr. Fox, whether it was ever known, that the person employed to sound the disposition of a belligerent party was also considered as the proper Minister for discussing all the relative interests, and for concluding a treaty? Mr. Fox himself had formerly advised the adoption of expedients for sounding the disposition of the enemy through the medium of neutral powers. As soon as France had adopted a form of government, from which an expectation of stability was to be drawn, Ministers readily waved all etiquette, and would not let such forms stand in the way of the permanent object of the peace and tranquillity of Europe, and they made direct proposals to the enemy. Had they, however, adopted the expedient suggested to them, and employed a neutral power to make their communications, was it to be expected that we should appoint that neutral power our Minister

Plenipotentiary to manage our interests, as well as those of our allies? Ministers had another motive for not employing the same Minister who made the advances as the negotiator of a peace; they wished to shew our allies that we did not go beyond the line of that arrangement which had been concerted with them, and that, true to our engagements, we had no separate object, and would not proceed a step without their concurrence. They wished to avoid any thing which could create the slightest suspicion that they were disposed to a separate negotiation, which it had been the uniform aim of France to produce, during the whole of the present contest. This was a policy which had been but too successfully practised on some of the allies of Great Britain, and had enabled her to exact from them, successively, more harsh and unequal conditions than she could have imposed had all the belligerent powers treated in concert. It was with a view to the same dealing that the Ministers had thought proper to publish, to the different courts of Europe, the message, and the answer, that the world might judge of the moderation of the allies, and the arrogance of the enemy.

In answer to the objections against a congress, urged by the Directory themselves, Mr. Pitt observed, that this mode of negotiation

had been pointed out by Ministers, because it was the only mode in which wars had been concluded in all cases in which Allies had been concerned, ever since the peace of Munster, the two last treaties only excepted.—In reply to Mr. Fox's remark, that the Directory were only high in their terms, because they knew that the British Ministers were not in earnest; and that they would be moderate and candid, if convinced of their sincerity; he conceived that the extravagance of their demands led to an opposite conclusion, and proved that the plea of incincerity was, with them, only a pretext. If they really thought Ministers insincere, it would have been their policy to propose just and moderate claims, the rejection of which would supply a proof of that want of candour, and of that appetite for war, which Mr. Fox joined the French in so unjustly ascribing to the British government. But having, in fact, no disposition for peace, and led away by false and aspiring notions of aggrandizement, the rulers of France offered such terms as they knew could not possibly be accepted.—Did they know the spirit, temper, and character, of this country, when they presumed to make such arrogant proposals? Those proposals, Mr. Pitt declared, he would leave to the silent sense impressed by them on the breast of every

Englishman. He thanked his God, that he was addressing himself to Britons, who were acquainted with the presumption of the enemy,—and who, conscious of their own resources, impelled by their native spirit, and valuing the national character, would prefer the chances and vicissitudes of war, to such unjust, unequal, and humiliating conditions.

As to the plea of the French Directory, that their constitution did not permit them to accept any terms which should diminish the extent of country, annexed by conquest to the territories of the republic, Mr. Fox had, himself, condemned it as unjust, and as opposing an eternal obstacle to peace, should it be persevered in; but, at the same time, unwilling to believe that any thing so unjust should have the sanction of the rulers of his favourite republic, he was disposed to believe it was only a pretext. That the interests of foreign countries should yield to those laws which a State should think proper to prescribe to itself, was truly represented, by Mr. Pitt, to be a fallacy, a monster in politics, that was never before heard of.—If, however, it were merely a pretext, it was singular that Mr. Fox, who seemed so shocked at this law of the French constitution, should direct none of his censure against the Legislators, or government, of that nation;

but vent all his indignation on the British Ministers, for deferring their proposals for peace till the enemy had formed such a constitution as rendered peace impracticable?—The Minister expressly declared, that the exorbitant demands of the enemy would never induce the British Cabinet to forego those moderate and pacific sentiments which they had always professed;—and that, whenever the French should be disposed to descend, from the high and commanding tone which they had assumed, to fair and reasonable views, the Ministers would be ready to treat with them. On a division, the resolutions* of Mr. Fox were rejected by two hundred and sixteen votes, and supported only by forty-two. The King prorogued the Parliament on the 19th of May, and the following day it was dissolved by proclamation.

It was at this precise point of time, that the armistice, which had been concluded in the preceding year, between the Austrian and French generals, was terminated by a notice from the former; and hostilities accordingly began on the 31st of May. The event of this campaign has been most grossly misrepresented, not merely by French writers, but by English writers also, who, founding their narratives entirely on the

* See these resolutions. Appendix A.

reports of the French commanders, which are mostly drawn up for the purpose of deception, and without the smallest regard to truth, have strangely perverted facts, and misled the public by most erroneous statements. At the opening of the campaign, the force of the two French armies, destined for service in Germany, under Moreau and Jourdan, amounted to more than 160,000 men, while the Imperial forces, under the Archduke Charles, including the Saxons, and other contingents of the Empire, were something under 150,000.*—The avowed object of the French was to penetrate into Germany, for the double purpose of subduing the power of Austria, and of maintaining their troops without any expence to themselves. This, indeed, had become necessary; for the treasury of the republic had been completely exhausted; and all the intermediate country, between the boundary of ancient France and the Rhine, had been so totally impoverished and drained, by the tyrannical exactions of the French generals and commissioners, that it was now wholly inadequate to the support of an army. Germany, therefore, was considered as a land hitherto untouched, and affording abundant

* The History of the Campaign of 1796, in Germany and Italy, p. 3, 4.

resources to the famished hordes which the French Directory were prepared to pour into it. It was the obvious policy of the Austrian Cabinet, which was aware of these intentions, to act, particularly with an inferior force, on the defensive, with a view to prevent the French from gaining any footing on the German side of the Rhine. The Aulic Council of War, however, determined on a different course of proceeding.

The first hostile movement was made by Jourdan, who commanded the army of the Sambre and Meuse. On the first of June, Kleber, who acted under Jourdan, attacked the Austrians, under the Prince of Wirtemberg, who was stationed in front of the river Sieg, with a very superior force. The action lasted several hours, but the Austrians, after sustaining a severe loss, were compelled to retire behind the Sieg, and to take up a strong position at Uckerath, which, however, they soon quitted, and retreated to Altenkirchen.—Here they were attacked, on the fourth of June, and completely routed, by the superior numbers of the enemy. According to the French accounts, the Austrians lost, in these two actions, 5,400 men.—They now retired behind the Lahn, while the opposite banks of that river were occupied by

fifty thousand French. The Archduke Charles had, during this time, been making a fruitless diversion in the Palatinate and the Hunsdruck; but perceiving the danger to which the Prince of Wirtemberg was exposed, he hastened to his assistance, with the greater part of his army. He passed the Lahn, on the fifteenth of June, attacked the French in a very advantageous position, from which he ultimately drove them with great loss, and, following up his victory, he pursued them, from post to post, till they retreated to the Sieg, taking most of their artillery, provisions, and baggage. Jourdan, meanwhile, had passed the Rhine, on the twelfth of June, at Neuwied to support Kleber, but the masterly manœuvres of the Archduke compelled him to re-trace his steps on the eighteenth. At the same time, the Austrian vanguard, of 11,000 men, commanded by General Kray, was sent forward in pursuit of Kleber, who, with 25,000 men, was retiring towards the Sieg. On the twentieth of June, Kray came up with the French, who, relying on their superior numbers, and confident of victory, attacked him with great vigour; but the extraordinary bravery of three Austrian battalions, who charged nine French battalions with the bayonet, decided the fortune of the day in favour of the Germans, who drove the French

from the field, after killing, wounding, and taking, two and twenty hundred of them.—This affair was the more honourable to the Austrians, as the enemy had more than double their number. Kleber, despairing of making any further stand against the victorious Archduke, continued his retreat to Dusseldorf.

During these transactions, on the Lower Rhine, Moreau had attacked the Austrian positions on the Upper Rhine. General Wurmser, who commanded them, had established himself in an advantageous post, before the fort of the Rhine, opposite to Manheim. From this position the French made two vain attempts to dislodge him, on the fourteenth and twentieth of June.—But these were mere feints to conceal a project of greater importance.

Accordingly, Moreau, having left a small force to watch the Austrian intrenchments, marched, on the twenty-first of June, with great rapidity, towards Strasburgh. At this critical juncture, the disasters, which the Austrians had experienced in Italy, induced the Court of Vienna to order a strong detachment of their army on the Rhine, to repair, without delay, to that country. General Wurmser, with 30,000 men, hastened to obey this order, which left the French a decisive superiority in Germany, and, in fact, opened to them the gates

of the country. Moreau, by the treachery of some Austrian officer, was early apprized of this intended movement, and, with his usual activity, resolved to profit by it. Early on the morning of the twenty-fourth of June, he attacked the important fort of Kehl, opposite to Strasburgh, with a force so totally inadequate to its reduction, as to afford strong grounds for suspecting, that he had some understanding with the garrison. With a degree of folly wholly unaccountable, the defence of this fort had been entrusted to a body of Suabian troops,* ill-disciplined, and worse commanded. They made no defence; and the French, having obtained possession of the fort, lost not a moment in putting it in such a state as to bid defiance to any future attack.

Moreau now crossed the Rhine with his army, 80,000 strong, and divided it into three columns.—The right column, under General Ferino, was employed to drive back, into the Brisgaw, the corps of Emigrants, under the gallant Prince of Condè, and the corps of General Frolich. The centre, under St. Cyr, pressed forwards towards the Suabian mountains, and

* A General Stein, who commanded these troops, was openly accused of having delivered up not only Kehl, but two other strong positions, to the French, for a considerable sum of money.—See History of the Campaign of 1796, p. 194.

secured the important positions of Knicbis and Frydenstadt, through the treachery of the Suabian General. The left column, under Desaix, was immediately opposed to the Austrian force, now commanded by M. de Latour, which he attacked at the beginning of July, and drove beyond Rastadt. Moreau, having joined Desaix, attacked Latour on the 5th of July, who was posted advantageously in front of the river Murg. The action lasted the whole day, and terminated to the disadvantage of the Austrians, who, the following day, made good their retreat to Ettlingen. At this place the Archduke Charles, who had compelled the army of the Sambre and Meuse to re-cross the Rhine and the Sieg, having left 30,000 men, under General Wartensleben, to watch their motions, joined Latour, with the remainder of his force, and took the command of the whole. But no sooner had the Archduke left the Lower Rhine, than Jourdan again prepared for offensive operations; and, having 65,000 men to oppose to the 30,000, under Wartensleben, he drove the Austrians, after an obstinate resistance, from post to post, took possession of Frankfort, on the 14th of July, and, moving forwards, threatened to place the Archduke between two victorious armies.

The Archduke, to prevent the accomplishment of this scheme, had resolved to hazard a general action, on the 10th, in the neighbourhood of Ettlingen; but while he was making the necessary dispositions for this purpose, on the 9th, his whole line was unexpectedly attacked by the French.—General Keim, who commanded the left of the Austrian line, and who had not yet been joined by some Saxon regiments destined to reinforce him, sustained four successive assaults with the greatest bravery; but, a fifth being made with fresh troops, he was ultimately compelled to give way, and to retire to Pfortsheim, where he met the Saxons. The Archduke, meanwhile, had been completely successful in repulsing the enemy, on his right and in front. But the retreat of Keim obliged him to forego his advantages, and to move back to Pfortsheim. Before, however, the Archduke and Wartensleben retreated, they had adopted the precaution of throwing strong garrisons into the fortresses on the Rhine;—five and twenty thousand men were left, in Ehrenbreitstein and Mentz on the Lower Rhine; and in Philipsburgh and Manheim, on the Upper Rhine.

The center of the French army, meeting with little opposition from the troops of Wirtemberg and Suabia, advanced into the heart of the former Duchy, and entered Stutgard, on the

18th of July. On that day the French made an attempt to carry the post of Canstadt, commanded by General Baillet, brother to Latour, and at the same time attacked a body of Austrians, under Prince John of Lichtenstein, at Essingen; the Austrians conducted themselves with great gallantry on this occasion, and defeated the French, with the loss of 1500 men.—On the 19th, the Archduke crossed the Neker, and, about the same time, General Wartensleben, who had continued his retreat, through Franconia, arrived at Wurtsburg, on a line with the front of the Archduke's force; and from this time the march of the two armies became more regular and better combined.

The imperial army now commenced a methodical retreat. It was formed into three divisions, amounting to nearly 80,000 men;—the first of which, about 25,000 strong, and under Wartensleben, was opposed to the army of Jourdan, which amounted to 55,000. The Archduke, with 40,000 men, was posted upon the Neker, which he defended against Moreau, who had upwards of 50,000 under his command. The third corps, of 15,000, was divided between the Prince of Condè and General Frolich, and defended the upper Danube against Ferino, at the head of 20,000 men. It is evident, from this statement, that the superiority of the French over the Aus-

trians was greater at this period than it was at the beginning of the campaign.

The French now found themselves in a rich country, abounding with every thing of which they stood so much in need. They levied heavy contributions, of all kinds, on the inhabitants; and they compelled the petty Princes in the circle of Suabia, and in the neighbouring districts, who had not spirit to defend their country, to purchase of them treaties of peace at a dear rate. The Archduke continued to retreat slowly, and disputing every inch of ground, in order to give time to the court of Vienna to send him reinforcements. He was frequently successful in his partial attacks on the posts of the enemy, who had, however, by the beginning of August, approached very near to the frontiers of Bohemia and Bavaria. On the 11th of that month, an action was fought, near Mettingen, in which the Archduke displayed great judgment, gallantry, and prudence. The left wing of the Austrians, under General Riese, turned the right of the enemy, advanced twelve miles upon their rear, and took a great number of prisoners; but their right wing having sustained a check, and the Archduke having received intelligence of the retreat of Wartensleben, who had been compelled to retire to Amberg, and who was there-

fore in danger of being separated entirely from him, he stopped the pursuit of the flying French, and encamped for the night on the ground which he had occupied before the action, in which the enemy lost 3,000 men, and the Austrians 1500.

On the 13th of August, the Archduke crossed the Danube at Donauwert, leaving, however two detachments on the left side of that river to occupy the roads from Nordlingen and Neechstadt to Donauwert. Hitherto every thing had succeeded, with the exception of partial checks, to the most sanguine expectations of the French, who had reason to flatter themselves with the final accomplishment of their grand design;—the union of three large and victorious armies, in the heart of Germany, and the conquest of the hereditary States of the House of Austria.—The moment was critical.—The French were already masters of the whole of Suabia and Franconia; Jourdan was directing his march towards the Danube, and threatened, at once, Bohemia and Upper Austria. Moreau had reached the frontiers of Bavaria; his right wing occupied the important posts of Bregqntz; and was advancing into the Tyrol; into which country Buonaparte, having subdued all opposition in Italy, hoped to extend his victorious career.

At this crisis, the Archduke Charles exhibited unequivocal proofs of a great mind, which seemed to derive additional vigour from increased danger; and to furnish resources adequate to every exigency. He was fully aware that not a moment was to be lost;—that some decisive measure should be immediately adopted,—and some great effort made, to rescue Austria from impending destruction.—Having lately received some reinforcements, which diminished the relative disparity of the two armies, he resolved to make a bold and desperate attempt to prevent the junction of Moreau and Jourdan, by attacking one of them with the greater part of his force, and to risk every thing in order to produce its total defeat and dispersion. For this purpose he left a part of his army, under General Latour, to defend Bavaria, and to guard the river Lech; and, having recalled all his divisions from the opposite side of the Danube, on the 15th, he ordered the bridge of Donauwert to be burnt, and stationed twenty thousand of his best troops in that town. The next day he marched rapidly along the right bank of the Danube, and, on the 17th, crossed that river at Neustadt and Ingoldstadt, leaving a garrison in the last place, which was capable of being defended. Turning to the right, in consequence of some information which he received

of Wartensleben's retreat to Schwartzenfeld, he reached Hemman on the 20th. Having established his communication with Wartensleben, his vanguard, under General Nauendorf, attacked and defeated a column of the French, under Bernadotte, on the 22d, at the village of Taswang, within a few miles of Ratisbon. The van column was again attacked the next day by General Hotze, and the Archduke, and driven back to Altdorf. Having thus gained ground on the rear of Jourdan's army, the Archduke laid the plan for a general attack on the French, on the 24th of August; but Jourdan, being apprized of Bernadotte's defeat, abandoned all his posts, with precipitation, on the night of the 23d, and retreated to Amberg. Here he was attacked, the next day, and driven back to Sultzbach; and continued his retreat, without intermission, to the Main, which he crossed at Eltman and Hallstadt, on the 30th; and, at length, halted near Lauringen and Schweinfurt. So rapid was this retreat, or rather *flight*, of Jourdan, that the Archduke was prevented from overtaking the main body of his army, though the Austrian light troops harassed him greatly on his march, intercepted his couriers, and took part of his baggage. The Archduke, however, by his masterly movements, contrived to reach Nuremberg, with one

column of his army, before the French, by which Jourdan was compelled to re-pass the Mein, and to abandon all hopes of effecting a junction with Moreau, or of receiving any assistance from him. The Archduke, indeed, had taken the precaution of detaching 10,000 men, under General Nauendorf, on the 25th of August, to strengthen De Latour's corps, and to prevent Moreau from making any powerful diversion in favour of Jourdan.

Without the smallest relaxation of his activity, the Archduke still pressed forward, and, by another skilful manœuvre, reached Wurtzburg before the French, who, after a vain attempt to dislodge him, retired to Kornach, a position three leagues distant from Wurtzburg. Here, at last, Jourdan resolved to make a stand, and to risk an action, before he abandoned a country, which it had cost him so much labour, and so many lives, to gain. He posted himself, very advantageously, on a chain of hills, partly covered with wood, and part of them having the river Mein at their feet. These hills terminated in a plain, in which his cavalry was posted. While another division, under General Lefebvre, covered the road from Schweinfurt to Fulde. In this position, the Archduke attacked him on the second of September; and, after a steady resistance for several

hours, the Austrian grenadiers forced their way through the wood, amidst an incessant fire, charged the French with fixed bayonet, on the tops of the hills, and, in a few minutes, dislodged them from every post.—Jourdan's retreat soon degenerated into a flight, and nothing but the approach of night, and the excessive fatigue of the Austrians, saved his army from total destruction. His loss, in this action, amounted to 5,000 men, besides ten pieces of cannon, and a vast number of baggage and provision waggons, which fell into the hands of the victors. The Austrians, on their part, lost only 800 men.

Jourdan continued his retreat towards the upper Lahn, across the country of Fulda and Weteravia. He reached Westlaer on the 9th of September. Never was retreat more rapid, nor more disorderly;—the army, having no regular supply of provisions, fled in all directions, plundering, and laying waste, the countries through which they passed. Incessantly harassed by the Austrians, and by the peasantry, their numbers were not less diminished by fatigue and desertion than by the sword, and their loss, between the Naab and the Lahn was estimated at upwards of 20,000 men.

Still closely pressed by the enemy, Jourdan pursued his retreat from the Lahn to the Sieg.

On the 20th of September, the vanguard of the Austrian army, under General Hotze, came up with the rear-guard of the French, under Marçeau, near Hochsteinbach; which he defeated, and took a great number of prisoners. General Marçeau received a mortal wound in the action, and died the next day. Two divisions of the French army finally passed the Rhine at Cologne, while the main body fled for safety to the entrenched camp before Dusseldorf. Thus ended the disastrous retreat of General Jourdan; a retreat of more than one hundred leagues; in the course of which he lost nearly one-half of his army, and was driven, in twenty-five days, from the frontiers of Bohemia to the walls of Dusseldorf. Very different had been the masterly retreat of Wartensleben, who, with 25,000 men, opposed to 50,000, disputed every inch of ground, sustained no signal defeat, and was nearly two months in retiring from the Sieg to the Naab.*

Moreau, whom the Archduke Charles had left on the confines of Bavaria, was not apprized of that Prince's departure from the banks of the Danube, till he was far advanced in his pursuit of Jourdan. The moment, however, he became acquainted with the fact, he resolved, as the

* History of the Campaign of 1796, p. 71.

Archduke had foreseen, to attack General Latour, in the hope of creating such a diversion as would effectually secure Jourdan from danger.—On the 24th of August, he crossed the river Lech, drove the Austrians from all their posts, and obliged them to retire to another position, between the Lech and the Iser. This passage of the Lech opened Bavaria to the incursions of the French, and gave them possession of a fertile country, abounding in every thing necessary for support, and desirable for plunder. Moreau, exulting in the imaginary success of his project, filled the Directory with the same false hopes which he indulged himself, of compelling the Archduke to abandon his victorious pursuit of the flying army of the Sambre and Meuse.—That wise Prince, however, contented himself, as has been seen, with detaching ten thousand men, under General Nauendörf, to reinforce Latour, who was, by that means, enabled to defend himself in his new position, and to prevent the enemy from penetrating beyond the Iser.

After the passage of the Lech, Moreau continued to advance for some days, when he took a position with his right at Dachau, his centre at Paffenhosen, and his left at Bombach. In assuming this position, Moreau, considering the relative situation of the Austrians, displayed

a degree of ignorance, not easily accounted for in a commander, whose military talents have never been called in question; for his left was exposed to an advantageous attack by the Austrian corps posted at Ingoldstadt, on the Danube; and his centre could not advance upon Ratisbon without being taken in flank by the Austrian division at Landshut. In order to remedy, in some degree, the effects of his own imprudence, he resolved to dislodge the Austrians from the *Tête de Pont* at Ingoldstadt. The first of September was the day fixed for the execution of this plan; but it was rendered entirely abortive, by the prudence and vigour of Generals Nauendorf and Mercantin, who, while Moreau was proceeding to Ingoldstadt, attacked the other part of his army, and compelled him to return to its protection, though too late to prevent its defeat. At the same time, General Latour was attacked by the French, in his position, opposite to Munich; but he soon forced them to retreat. In the actions of this day, both sides claimed the victory;—the loss, indeed, was nearly equal; and neither army returned to its former position, but the Austrians were so far successful, that they frustrated the enemy's project.

At this period, the Elector of Bavaria purchased a separate peace from the French, at the

expence of about four hundred thousand pounds sterling, and an immense quantity of clothes, provisions, and horses, besides twenty of his best pictures;—a new species of contribution which these Republican freebooters did not fail to levy, wherever their arms were successful.—Thus, by the invasion of Bavaria, the French succeeded in detaching another Prince from the Germanic Confederacy, and in weakening the force of the Imperial army.—But never was advantage more dearly bought, for it occasioned the loss of Jourdan's army, while it exposed that of Moreau to the most imminent danger of destruction.

Moreau, at length, became sensible of this danger; on the tenth of September, he ordered a large body of cavalry to repass the Danube; and, the next day, he quitted his position on the Iser, in order to follow them; but in the execution of this manœuvre, his rear guard was vigorously attacked, in the vicinity of Munich, by the Prince of Furstenberg and General Frolich, who killed and took upwards of two thousand men.—He retired towards Neuburg, and recalled General Desaix who had taken a forward position beyond the Danube. — But Desaix, on his return, was attacked, by General Nauendorf, on the fourteenth, when his rear-guard suffered conside-

rably, and a thousand of them fell into the hands of the victorious Austrians. The French General now perceived the necessity of effecting his retreat with all possible expedition. The Austrians had received considerable re-inforcements from the Hereditary States; they had already turned both flanks of the French, and pressed them very closely, while a corps, commanded by General Petrarch, formed by a portion of the garrisons of Phillipsburg and Manheim, and ten squadrons of light cavalry, detached by the Archduke, had entered the Margraviate of Baden; and, after taking the Fort of Kehl, and losing it again by imprudence and carelessness, secured the valley of Kintzig, and the defile of Knichis, took all the magazines which the French had established in the Duchy of Wirtemberg, intercepted their convoys and couriers, and cut off their communication with Strasburgh. Moreau's situation was, at this period, truly critical; and it was rendered more so, by the animosity of the Suabian peasants, (the principal passes of whose country were already in possession of the Austrians) who, having experienced from the French troops every species of cruelty, insult, and oppression, were prepared to exact a severe retribution, whenever a reverse of fortune should afford them the opportunity. General Latour

had divided his army into several different corps; and Moreau, aware that he must fight and conquer before he could safely retreat, resolved to attack them separately. Accordingly, on the thirtieth of September, he began the execution of this plan, by attacking the main division under Latour; but he was repulsed with loss. On the following night, however, he renewed the attack, with greater advantage. Two of the Imperial Generals were taken by surprize, and their division suffered severely. The gallant band of Emigrants, under the Prince of Condè, distinguished themselves greatly upon this occasion; and the Duke D'Enghien signalized his skill and courage in a particular manner. The Austrians lost four thousand men, and twelve pieces of cannon, in the conflict.

On the fifth of October, Moreau continued his retreat, which was greatly facilitated by his late victory at Biberach, which prevented Latour from renewing his pursuit till the seventh. The first division of the French forced the passage of the valley of Hell, which was but feebly defended by a small and inadequate force under Colonel D'Apre, and took possession of Friburgh, on the thirteenth of October. The succeeding divisions followed, on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth,

while the baggage and ammunition-waggons passed through the forest towns, under the protection of the right wing.

Latour now gave up the pursuit, which he had continued for a month, without skill, and, consequently, without success. Indeed, his conduct supplied as strong a contrast to that of the Archduke, in his pursuit of Jourdan, as that of Jourdan did to the conduct of Moreau. He now marched towards the valley of Kintzig, to form a junction with the Archduke, who was further strengthened by the union of the corps under Nauendorf and Petrarch.

Moreau, elated, as he well might be, with the success of his retreat, resolved to maintain himself in the Brisgau; and flattered himself with the hope of finishing the campaign by a splendid victory over the Archduke Charles. At this ti[illegible]he Austrian army formed a line, with its right against the Rhine, extending along the front of the River Eltz, crossing the mountains of Simonswald, and terminating, on the left, at the entrance of the vallies of St. Peter and St. Megen, where the Prince of Condè and General Frolich were posted. The right of the French occupied the mouth of these vallies, from which their line passed by Simmonswald, Valdkirch, Emendingen, in front of the Eltz

and of Kintzingen, near the Rhine, to which their left extended.

After some smart skirmishes on the two preceding days, the Austrians, on the morning of the 19th of October, attacked the French line, and, after a vigorous resistance, drove the enemy from every post. Moreau took up a new position behind the Eltz; but he did not think it prudent to wait a second attack, which the Archduke, with his usual promptitude and vigour, was preparing to make. He was pursued by the Austrians, defeated in another action, and finally passed the Rhine at Huningen, on the 26th of October.—That Moreau conducted his retreat with great skill cannot be denied; but that he committed many errors, and was guilty of many acts of imprudence, is equally certain. By unnecessary delay he exposed himself to bad situations, and to imminent danger; and, but for the more inexcusable misconduct of the Austrian Generals, and especially of Latour, his whole army must have been destroyed. It has been truly observed, that to the injudicious distribution of Latour's force, Moreau was principally indebted for his success;—for, by forming an immense circle round the retreating French, the latter were enabled to direct their whole force against any point of it which it

was necessary to force. Whereas, if the Austrian force had been concentrated, it might have watched an opportunity, and have acted with irresistible strength, and decisive effect, on any part of the French columns. The faults, indeed, were great on both sides; but on that of the Austrians they were not balanced by any display of skill, or by any exertion of vigour;—whereas the French General, by an able improvement of many of the opportunities with which the misconduct of his opponents supplied him, and by the final accomplishment of his main object, made ample amends for his errors.

The Archduke Charles determined to give no repose to his army until he had recovered the important fort of Khel from the hands of the French, who had greatly strengthened its fortifications, and given it the additional protection of a strongly entrenched camp. The Austrians opened the siege of the place about the middle of November;—it continued seven weeks, during which time, it is difficult to say whether the besiegers or the besieged displayed the greatest courage and perseverance. It was not till the 10th of January that the fort surrendered, after a loss of many thousand men on either side. The head of the bridge

of Huningen, which was a post of great strength, had been contested with almost equal obstinacy, and was carried by the Austrians, on the second of the following month, when the whole of the French re-crossed the Rhine. After the defeat of Jourdan, the remnants of his scattered army were entrusted to Bournonville, the late Secretary at War, one of those conventional agents whom Dumouriez had arrested in the Netherlands, and who had been recently exchanged for the Princess Royal of France: this man, whose ignorance and incapacity could only be exceeded by his vanity and presumption, filled his reports to the Directory with the most false and exaggerated accounts of the prowess of his troops, magnifying every skirmish into a battle, and every action into a victory. After various conflicts, alternately advantageous and prejudicial to either party, and productive of no decisive effect, hostilities ceased, as by mutual consent, and both armies went into winter quarters, on the 10th of November.

Thus, at the end of this campaign, in which so much money had been expended, and so much blood had been shed, the French and Austrians remained in nearly the same relative situation which they occupied at its commencement. The French had two objects in view, first, to

conquer the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria; and, secondly, to maintain their armies at the expence of the neighbouring powers. They failed completely in the former; but they succeeded in the latter; for, during four months, the armies had subsisted entirely on the fruits of their plunder, and they had gained a farther advantage, by inspiring several of the petty Princes of Germany with such a dread of their power, as induced them to resign all hopes of successful resistance, and, by a base violation of their duty as members of the Germanic body, to desert the head of the Empire, and purchase a precarious and disgraceful peace from the French. The most accurate estimate of the loss on either side, during the campaign in Germany, makes that of the Austrians amount to between twenty-five and thirty thousand men; and that of the French to forty thousand.* The events of the campaign served to raise the military character of the Archduke Charles very high indeed in the estimation of his countrymen. He had displayed most of the qualifications requisite to form a great commander;—a mind fertile in resources of every kind; neither so elated by victory as to neglect the means for

* The History of the Campaign of 1796, p. 185.

improving its advantages; nor so depressed by defeat as to omit the adoption of any measures which might counteract its effects;—a quick perception; a sound judgment; great promptitude, activity, energy, and decision.*

The same motives which had induced the French to invade Germany, influenced their irruption into Italy—plunder, and the hope of dictating peace to the Emperor. The wretched state to which their army, in the latter country, had been reduced by the sword, by want of provisions, and every means of subsistence, led the Austrians to believe, that the presence of a large force there would be unnecessary. At the beginning of the year, however, the Directory had assembled about forty thousand of their best troops, in the southern provinces of the Republic, under pretence of checking

* The following fact will convey some idea of the *decisiveness* which forms a leading trait in the character of the Archduke.—In the affair of the twenty-fourth of October, he ordered the Major of a regiment of light horse to attack a redoubt which the French had erected in a vineyard. The officer obeyed; but the ground being very disadvantageous for cavalry, he was repulsed. The Archduke, coming up at the moment of his retreat, called out to him,—"Sir, you misunderstood me; my orders were to *take* the redoubt!" The officer felt the force of the reproach, renewed the attack with all the vigour of despair, and carried the redoubt, though at the expence of his life.—*History of the Campaign of* 1796.

the disposition to Royalty, which had manifested itself in that quarter. Buonaparte, who had demanded, of his patron, Barras, some reward for the zeal which he had displayed in the murder of his fellow citizens at Paris, in the month of October, received the command of this army, on condition that he would accept, at the same time, the hand of Madame Beauharnois, who, since the death of her husband, had lived with Barras, as his mistress. The greedy Corsican, who never suffered any principle of delicacy to interfere, for a moment, with the promotion of his interest, gratefully accepted an offer which a man of honour would have rejected with indignation. He, accordingly, married the lady, and took the command of the army of Italy, which entered the territory of the Genoese Republic, in the month of April. Soon after the campaign opened, Buonaparte found himself at the head of more than 60,000 men, 45,000 of which were under his immediate command;—the remainder being posted along the *Col di Tende*, and the *Riviere di Genoa*.—Kellerman, who headed the army of the Alps, as it was called, had 25,000 men under him; so that the whole force of the French, in the spring of this year, amounted to 85,000 men. The Austrian army, under General Beaulieu, did not amount to 35,000

effective men, including a Neapolitan corps of about 7,000. The Piedmontese army, commanded by the Austrian General Colli, amounted to 20,000, and was employed in defending the different approaches to Piedmont; and the Duc D'Aosta was stationed in Savoy, with 15,000 men, to watch Kellerman. Hence it will appear that, to the French force of 85,000 men, the Allies had only 70,000 men to oppose. At the very opening of the campaign the Austrian General committed a gross fault, which had a material influence on the result of all the subsequent operations.—Deceived by a false report, spread purposely by the French, he conceived that they meant to attack Genoa, and he, therefore, sent a strong detachment to cover that city, and, wishing to keep up a communication with the Piedmontese, extended his line so as to spread over a front of sixty miles;—thus affording an opportunity to the enemy to attack him, on any point they chose, with a greatly superior force. On the eleventh of April, General Beaulieu made a successful attack on the right of the French, and drove them from all their posts, except the strong redoubt of Montenotte.—This he assailed on the following morning; but the French, having made a movement in the night, had turned both his flanks, and compelled him to give

over all thoughts of attack, and to think only of defending himself. After a long resistance against a superior force, the Austrians were obliged to retreat, having lost, according to the French accounts, 3,500 men, of whom 1,000 were said to be killed, and the rest prisoners.

After this defeat, the Austrians fell back, with a view to form a junction with the Piedmontese, but they were speedily overtaken by the French, and reduced to the necessity of risking a general action, at Montelesino, on the fourteenth. The conflict was sustained for several hours, with great resolution, and victory was long doubtful; but the Austrians were at length overpowered by numbers, and completely routed. Buonaparte's account made their loss, on this occasion, amount to 3,500 killed, and 8,000 prisoners. The French themselves lost two Generals, Panel and Quentin, and a third, Joubert, was severely wounded. If the French account were to be credited, the allies had lost, in five days, 15,000 men, of whom more than two-thirds were Austrians; so that the Austrian army itself was reduced to 20,000.—Yet, notwithstanding this reduction, General Beaulieu, the very night after the last action, attacked the French army, put it to the rout, and drove it

from the position of Dego, which it had taken from him in the morning. In this affair the French, who, as usual, converted their defeat into a victory, lost three more of their Generals, Causse, Dupuis, and Rondeau. — They stated the loss of the Austrians to be 600 killed, and 1,400 prisoners.

Buonaparte, having succeeded in his attempt to separate the Austrians from the Piedmontese, left a part of his army to watch the movements of the latter, and marched with his main force against the former. After several fruitless attempts to resist the victorious progress of the French, and seeing no prospect of being relieved by the Austrians, the King of Sardinia soon concluded an armistice, and afterwards a peace, with the French republic, which secured to the latter the sovereignty of Savoy and Nice, and put him in possession of most of the strong places in Piedmont, with a free passage for his troops through the Sardinian territory. The French had now a full opening into the Milanese, and almost a certainty of reducing it, as it was defended by an army not half so numerous as their own. Beaulieu, of course, was reduced to the necessity of acting on the defensive, and of prolonging his resistance, with a view to afford time to the Court of Vienna to send him reinforcements. For

this purpose, he crossed the Po at Valenza, and took a position behind it, between the rivers Tesino and Terdoppio, in order to protect the Milanese. — But Buonaparte proceeded, by forced marches, towards Placentia, and crossed the Po, on the 8th of May, with little opposition;—the troops which Beaulieu had sent to oppose the passage having arrived too late to prevent it. The detachments which had advanced for this purpose proceeded to Lodi, to which place Beaulieu had moved in the night.

On the 10th of May, the Austrian rear-guard, which was posted in front of the town of Lodi, and of the river Adda, was cannonaded by the advanced guard of the French, who compelled them to evacuate the town, and to retire to the opposite side of the river. A great fault was committed here in not breaking down the bridge, after they had crossed it; — but the omission, however, did not arise from negligence, but from design;—for Major Malcamp, Beaulieu's son-in-law, who commanded the rear-guard of the Austrians, had, as he thought, guarded the bridge so effectually that the enemy would not dare to cross it.— In fact, he had placed several pieces of cannon at the end of the bridge, which served to enfilade it, while batteries, placed on the right and left, commanded it by a cross fire. Convinced of

its perfect security, he would not allow it to be destroyed. He was destined, however, to perceive, and to deplore, his error, when too late to correct it.

As soon as the whole of the French army had reached the banks of the Adda, Buonaparte assembled his general officers, and imparted to them his resolution to storm the bridge.—The plan was unanimously condemned as rash, destructive, and useless.—Vain and inflexible, the desperate Corsican treated their remonstrances with disdain; and, having called together a council of *grenadiers*, he communicated his determination to them, and, by successful appeals to their vanity, strongly aided by other persuasives, extorted their consent to his project.* Four thousand grenadiers and carabineers, formed into a solid column, approached the bridge; but no sooner had they set foot

* At the end of his speech to the grenadiers, the latter said—"Give us some brandy, and we will see what is to be done." This potent mean of infusing courage into the republican troops, the good effects of which had been so often experienced, was administered in abundance, and proved much more efficacious than the Corsican's eloquence. This fact is related on the authority of an officer of the Austrian staff, who received it from a French officer who was present at the battle of Lodi, and was taken prisoner some time after. *History of the Campaign of* 1796, *p.* 370.

on it than a dreadful discharge of grape shot, from the Austrian guns, compelled them to fall back. Again and again they returned to the charge, fortified by liquor, and insensible to danger, but again and again were they mowed down by a tremendous fire, from the short distance of a few paces. Any commander, who had the smallest regard for the lives of his men, particularly when he could have secured his object, with little or no loss, by different means, would have now abandoned this destructive conflict. But Buonaparté had no such regard;—he considered his soldiers as mere automata, to move at his command;—or rather as instruments, corporeally active indeed, but mentally passive, for the attainment of his objects, whatever they might be, and whose lives were not worthy the thought of a moment. He supplied the enormous deficiency, in the assailing column, occasioned by the destructive fire of the enemy, with fresh troops, and ordered another attack to be made. Six Generals placed themselves at the head of their men, whom they inflamed by their language, and animated by their example. Availing themselves of a propitious moment, when the thick smoke, from the Austrian guns, enveloped the bridge, as it were in darkness, and effectually obscured them from the sight of their enemy,

they rushed impetuously forwards, reached the opposite extremity of the bridge, before they were perceived by the Austrians, and, consequently, escaped their fire. They then seized the guns, while the remainder of the army passed over the bridge without opposition; and the Austrians, unable to contend against such superior numbers, abandoned their ground, and began their retreat. They were protected by the Neapolitan cavalry, who greatly distinguished themselves on this occasion.

The success of this action by no means justified the attempt;—nor is the smallest credit due to Buonaparté, either for his skill or his judgment, in directing and in arranging the plan of the attack.—He acted in direct contradiction to the general opinion of his officers; and took a severe responsibility upon himself. Nor was the weight of this at all diminished, nor ought the effects of it to have been at all averted, by the final accomplishment of his plan. It is the duty of a commander so to execute his projects, as to expose his troops to the least possible danger; and to incur the least possible loss. And, if two modes of attaining an object present themselves, by one of which five hundred men only are likely to be sacrificed, and by the other of which five thousand form the probable amount of the loss

to be sustained, the commander, who prefers the latter to the former, is as much guilty of the murder of four thousand five hundred men as if he signed the order for their execution. Now, it is certain that Buonaparté might have passed the Adda with as little loss as he incurred in the passage of the Po;—there was no more necessity for his crossing the one river at Lodi, than there was for his crossing the other at Valenza.—At Valenza, he found the Austrians prepared to receive him, and he wisely desisted from his purpose, and gained his point, at a different place, with little or no opposition; and, consequently, with little loss. At the bridge of Lodi, the Austrians were more advantageously posted; and the passage could not be effected without a certainty of immense loss. There was every motive for adopting a similar line of conduct; and the same facility subsisted for crossing the river at a different part. Yet, did he pursue a totally different course; and, utterly regardless of the dreadful sacrifice which he was about to make, without the smallest necessity to call for, or to justify, it, he obstinately persisted in his destructive project.* He shewed himself, therefore, woefully

* An attempt has been made to justify his conduct, in this instance, by the ridiculous pretext, that, "unless he suc-

deficient in the first qualities of an able commander; and had nothing, indeed, to boast of, but obstinacy and decision. The French officers and troops certainly displayed, on this occasion, the most intrepid courage; but the praise so profusely bestowed on their commander, for his personal prowess, does not appear to have truth for its basis. It is not probable, that Buonaparté should place himself at the head of the first column which attacked the bridge; he would ill indeed have discharged his duty as Commander in Chief, if he had exposed himself to unnecessary danger, in such a situation. Nor is it more probable, that he was one of the six Generals who led the final attack. There is reason to think that he did not pass the

ceeded in effecting a passage over the bridge, his failure would be construed into a defeat, and the reputation of the French arms would suffer in the opinion of the public." The same reason, if there were any validity in it, would have rendered it necessary for him to force the passage of the Po at Valenza; and the same consequences would have resulted from his prudential forbearance on that occasion. But this is a mere pretext, equally vain and absurd. The fact appears to have been, that, incensed at the vigilance and activity of the Austrians, (who, by their judicious movements, at this period, seem to have been desirous of making amends for their past imprudence, and met him at every point that was defensible) he became irritated; and, impatient of restraint, and obeying the natural impetuosity of his temper, he resolved, at all hazards, to effect his purpose without further delay.

bridge till the Austrian guns had been secured; and he had not much opportunity afterwards for the display of his courage. In his letter to the Directory, Buonaparté stated the loss of the Austrians to amount to 2,500 men, of which 1,000 were prisoners; while, with the most profligate contempt of truth, he reduced his own to *four hundred*. Indeed, not the smallest reliance can be placed on any one of this man's reports; but never did he exhibit a more glaring proof of their falsehood, than at present.—By no one, but himself, was his loss, at the bridge of Lodi, ever estimated at less than four thousand; and it has even been carried, by some, who had opportunity for personal observation, as high as seven thousand.*—Indeed, from the very nature of the action, in which a close-wedged column of troops was long exposed to a most heavy fire of artillery, posted within a few paces of them; it was impossible not to sustain an immense loss of men.—This loss, however, was soon supplied;

* A general officer, who had served in Italy, assured me, that the French lost seven thousand men at the bridge of Lodi. This gentleman, who noticed the personal prowess which Buonaparté was said to have displayed on the occasion, laughed at the account; and told me, that he had seen him frequently in action, and that no man ever exhibited less courage, or took greater care of his own person.

by reinforcements from Kellerman's army, who, since the peace with Sardinia, had no enemy to contend with in the Alps.

The French entered Milan on the eleventh of May, it having been previously evacuated (the citadel excepted) by the Austrians; and, on the following day, Buonaparté made his triumphal entry into the capital of the Milanese, on which he conferred the *blessings* of French liberty, on the payment of the stipulated *price*. The same *blessings* were bestowed on the Duke of Modena, on similar conditions, accompanied by the sacrifice of twenty valuable paintings! On his first entrance into Lombardy, Buonaparté had issued a proclamation, in which he held out the following lure to the inhabitants.—"Nations of Italy!—The French army is come to break your chains,—the French are the friends of the people in every country;—your religion, your property, your customs, shall be respected." At Milan, where he stayed some time, to gratify his vanity, and to consolidate his plans of conquest, he issued a second proclamation, on the twentieth of May, in which he again observed:—"Respect for property and personal security, and respect for the national religion; these are the sentiments of the government of the French Republic, and of the army of Italy.—The French, victorious, consider the

nations of Lombardy as their brothers." It has been already observed, that these blessings were too great to be conferred without an adequate price; and, therefore, in this very proclamation, he imposed on the Milanese a *provisional* contribution of eight hundred thousand pounds, and upwards; and successive exactions were afterwards levied on that single state, to the amount, in the whole, of near six millions sterling.—Such was the comment on Buonaparté's text,—"Respect for property!"—His "respect for the national religion," was manifested in a similar way. The churches were consigned to indiscriminate plunder. Every religious and charitable fund, every public treasure, was confiscated. The country was rendered the scene of every species of rapine and disorder. The priests, the established form of worship, all the objects of religious reverence, were openly insulted, and the modesty of the women violated, by the licentious hordes of Republican France. At Pavia, in particular, the tomb of St. Augustine, which the inhabitants were accustomed to view with peculiar veneration, was mutilated and defaced. This last provocation having roused the resentment of the people, they flew to arms, surrounded the French garrison, and took them prisoners;

but carefully abstained from inflicting the smallest violence on a single soldier. In revenge for this conduct, Buonaparté, then on his march to the Mincio, suddenly returned, collected his troops, and carried the extremity of military execution over the country. One act of this ferocious Corsican, the page of history must transmit to future times, as alone sufficient to stamp his character with indelible infamy.—At the village of Binasco, a French soldier entered the cottage of a peasant, and offered violence to the person of his daughter, a girl of fourteen, in his presence. — The enraged parent, yielding to a virtuous impulse of resentment, instantly levelled the licentious miscreant to the earth. To punish this act, which every man of virtue, and of honour, must commend, Buonaparté ordered the village to be burned, and its inhabitants, to the number of eight hundred, without distinction of sex or age, to be put to the sword.—And, to the disgrace of France, be it told, his orders were strictly obeyed. He then marched to Pavia, took it by storm, consigned it to general plunder, and published a proclamation, on the twenty-sixth of May, ordering his troops to shoot all those who had not laid down their arms, and taken *an oath of obedience;* and to burn every village

in which the alarm-bell should be sounded, and to put its inhabitants to death.*

With equal good faith Buonaparté observed his treaty with the Duke of Modena. In consideration of half a million of money, secured to him by that treaty, the Corsican solemnly stipulated for the perfect neutrality of his Duchy.—Yet, soon after, he caused the Duke to be arrested, and extorted from him two hundred thousand sequins.—He was then allowed to sign another treaty, called a *Convention de Suretè*, or Pact of Safety, which was only the prelude to further exactions.

General Beaulieu's efforts were now confined to the sole object of covering the impor-

* The language applied to these patriotic efforts of the Italians, to oppose the tyranny of their enemies, and to rid their country of the most sanguinary ruffians that ever disgraced the earth, is most unwarrantable and reprehensible. They have been generally termed *Insurrections*, (See the Campaigns of 1796, Dr. Bisset's Reign of George the Third, Ottridge's Annual Register, and all the French writers, without exception,) which signify only *seditious* risings, and *rebellious* commotions, and necessarily apply to the illegal resistance of regular and legitimate authority; whereas the opposition of the Italians, to the French, was the lawful and proper resistance of an enemy in support of such authority;---an act, in short, of self-defence, and self-preservation, justified alike by the laws of war, and the laws of nations. The use of such loose and inappropriate expressions cannot be too strongly deprecated.

tant fortress of Mantua, and maintaining the communication with Germany. For this purpose he took an advantageous position on the Mincio, where he was attacked by the French on the 30th of May.—In imminent danger of having his retreat cut off, he threw a garrison of 12,000 men into Mantua, and crossed the Adige with the remainder of his army; defeated a body of French sent in pursuit of him; traversed the states of Venice, and retired into the narrow passes of the Tyrol, with 14,000 men, being all that was left of his whole force.

Buonaparté, now left without an army to oppose, extended his conquests at pleasure. The King of Naples, alarmed at the rapidity of his course, solicited and obtained a treaty of peace early in June; and the Pope purchased a precarious neutrality, with a contribution of 900,000 pounds, 100 paintings, 200 valuable manuscripts; the cession of Ferrara, Bologna, the fort of Urbino, and the citadel of Ancona; and the liberation of all his seditious and traitorous subjects. This last disgraceful stipulation had been imposed on the King of Sardinia; and formed a regular article in the new diplomatic code of republican France, who found it her interest to compel degraded

Sovereigns thus to sanction the rebellion of their own subjects.

In violation of the rights of neutrality, and of the treaty which had been concluded between the French republic and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, in the preceding year, and in breach of a positive promise given only a few days before, the French army took forcible possession of Leghorn, on the 27th of June, for the purpose of seizing the British property which was deposited there.

Towards the end of July, Marshal Wurmser took the command of the Austrian army in Italy, which was now increased to 47,000 men. This army he divided into three bodies, with the centre of which he advanced to the Mincio, to attack the front of the French army which was posted between Mantua and Peschiera, having formally invested the first of these places. The right column, under General Quosdanovich forced the posts of Salo and Brescia, took two thousand prisoners, including three Generals; and pushed forward on the road from Brescia to Mantua, to take the French in the rear, and to support the main attack by the centre column; which had been equally successful in carrying all the French positions on the Adige, where they took 1500 prisoners and ten pieces of cannon.

Buonaparté, now in danger of being surrounded, precipitately raised the siege of Mantua, in the night of the 31st of July, and left all his artillery and ammunition a prey to the garrison, who made a timely sally, and took six-hundred of his rear-guard prisoners. He now put in practice his favourite plan of attacking, with his whole force, the separate columns of the enemy;—a plan to which recourse had been so often had, that it was a matter of surprise that the Austrian Generals should have neglected the necessary precautions for preventing its success. His first attempt was directed against the forces under Quosdanovich, which were divided into several parts, at Lonado, Montechiaro, Dezinzano, Brescia, and Salo. All these were successively attacked by the French, on the three first days of August. The most obstinate and severe of all the actions was that which took place, on the third, before Dezinzano, where 4,000 Austrians beat 10,000 French, taking a General and some hundreds of men prisoners.* The French, however, being reinforced with fresh troops, renewed the attack; and the Austrians, overpowered by numbers, and worn out with fatigue, occasioned by a continued march of four days and

* Campaigns of 1796. p. 266.

four nights, were nearly all killed or taken. One half of the corps under Quosdanovich suffered the same fate, while the rest with difficulty escaped to the protecting mountains of the Tyrol. The French also lost a great number of men, and several of their generals.

The French commander now advanced with 28,000 men, against General Wurmser, who, with 18,000 Austrians had repassed the Mincio, and was endeavouring to form a junction with Quosdanovich. On the third of August, Buonaparte came up with his advanced guard, composed of 3,000 men, under General Liptay.—This, he immediately attacked with his whole force;—but the Austrian General defended himself with equal skill and resolution, disputing every inch of ground, till Wurmser arrived with the main body. —Before the army, who were fatigued by a long march, made during extreme heat, could be formed, they were furiously assailed by the French, who had every superiority which numbers, and the advantage of ground, could afford. The Austrians, however, posted twelve pieces of cannon so judiciously on an eminence which supported their left, as to enable them to maintain themselves under every disadvantage.

The loss of the Austrians, on this day,

amounted to about 2,600 men, though Buonaparte chose to represent it to the Directory as amounting to 7000.*—The loss of the French was at least as great.

The two armies passed the night within musquet shot of each other; but they were so overcome with fatigue, that neither of them made the least movement on the following day;—the Austrians still preserving the same disadvantageous position which they had occupied on the third. Here they were attacked, on the morning of the fifth, and borne down by the weight of numbers. The whole of them must inevitably have been destroyed or taken, if the English Colonel Graham had not fortunately succeeded in persuading Wurmser to order a retreat, after all the solicitations of his own officers had proved fruitless. It had been delayed so long that it could not be effected without considerable loss. Three thousand men were killed, wounded, and taken; and thirty pieces of cannon fell into the hands of the French. Before Wurmser reached the Tyrol, he had lost at least one half of his army;—he had, however, succeeded in strengthening the garrison of Mantua, and in throwing in considerable supplies of provisions and ammunition.

* Campaign of 1796, p. 260.

Buonaparté made the whole loss of the Austrians amount, in this short expedition, to seventy pieces of cannon, a still greater number of ammunition waggons, 6000 men, killed or wounded, and 15,000 prisoners. His statement, however, was not so exaggerated as his accounts generally were, though still sufficiently remote from the truth,—According to the official report of General Wurmser, to the Aulic Council of War, the Austrians lost 17,000 men, including 391 officers.—The loss of the French amounted to 10,000, of whom 4000 were made prisoners.*

* Ibid p. 273.—Buonaparté had two very narrow escapes from falling into the hands of the Austrians.—Some croats had been placed in ambuscade, on the 31st of July, on the road from Brescia to Peschiera, with orders not to fire, and to stop none but officers of rank. In the evening Buonaparte and his *fidus Achates*, Berthier, with their staff, passed along the road, preceded by three Hussars. The croats, forgetting their orders, sprang upon the road, and fired at the Hussars. They killed two of them, but the third escaped and apprized his Generals of their danger; who, unfortunately, escaped all the shots that were fired at them, and fled with too great speed to be overtaken.—Never, surely, was disobedience of orders productive of more important effects;—for had these two Generals been either killed or taken, it is more than probable, that the face of affairs in Europe would have undergone a complete change;—and many of the calamities which it has since experienced have been prevented. On another occasion, the Austrian Hussars at Goito missed Buonaparte, by two minutes only.

Having thus overthrown all opposition in Italy, the French commander applied himself to the execution of the grand plan of the Directory, for forming a junction with their armies in Germany, in order to overwhelm Austria with their united force. Buonaparté, therefore, followed the remains of Wurmser's army, and, on the 4th of September, attacked and forced the Austrian line; and thereby became master ~~the~~ of the city, and of the principal part of the Duchy, of Trent. Wurmser, aware of the object of the French, resolved to

The total contempt of truth which marked the public dispatches of Buonaparté was not confined merely to exaggerated statements, but extended even to the fabrication of events which never occurred. Of this a memorable proof was exhibited at the present period. In one of his dispatches to the Directory, he informed them, that, being at Lonado with 1200 men, at the moment when the town was surrounded by 4,000 Austrians, he ordered them to lay down their arms!! Though there was not a syllable of truth, in this story, though it was known, to both armies, to be a scandalous fabrication of his own, yet has it been adopted by historical writers in England, who seem to have combined with those of France for the purpose of poisoning the very source of history, by founding their narratives of pretended *facts* on such false documents, and polluted authorities. The whole account of this campaign, in the Annual Register for 1796, which has been hastily, and without examination, adopted by Dr. Bisset, in his history of the present reign, has been taken from French reports.

make an effort, at least, to defeat it, by advancing, with a part of his forces, along the Brenta, and so turn the right flank of the French, by which means he hoped to prevent them from penetrating into the Tyrol, and to keep them in Italy. This plan produced the desired effect;—Buonaparté marched in pursuit of Wurmser, overtook his rear-guard, on the 7th of September, at Primolano, on the Brenta, which he defeated, and put to the rout.—Wurmser, however, continued his march, out-manœuvred the French, eluded every attempt to intercept, and to surround, him, beat one of the divisions sent against him, at Cerea, on the 11th, took 800 prisoners, and succeeded in reaching the walls of Mantua, with 10,000 men. The French attacked him, on the 13th, but he again defeated them, killed a great number, and took 1,500 prisoners, with ten pieces of cannon. Buonaparté then drew his troops round Mantua, and all active hostilities ceased for several weeks.

The Cabinet of Vienna, resolved to make another effort to raise the blockade of Mantua, and to rescue Lombardy from the oppressive dominion of the French, collected a corps of 30,000 men, under General Alvinzy, which was put in motion, on the last day of October, and directed its course towards Bassano, on

4,000 men; but the French ultimately succeeding in driving the Austrians beyond the [illegible] and in breaking down the bridge at Fo[illegible] General Davidovich, during this time, had gained some advantages over the French in the duchy of Trent, killing two or three thousand of them, and taking as many prisoners. Alvinzy continued to advance, and, after various skirmishes, brought the French to action, on the 12th of November, defeated them, and compelled them to fall back on Verona. He then moved nearer to Davidovich, and had these two Generals maintained a right understanding with each other, and united their efforts to form a junction of their respective forces, Buonaparté must inevitably have lost all the fruits of the campaign, and probably have been driven out of Italy. But it seemed as if the Austrian officers were intent only on defeating the plans which they were employed to accomplish, and acted as if the success of the enemy was the object of their wishes. On the 13th, in the night, Buonaparté marched with a strong body of troops, along the Adige, with a view to surprize the rear guard of the Austrians, and to carry off their artillery and baggage. But he found his march impeded by a body of Austrians, who were strongly entrenched at the village of Arcole, [illegible]

unded with morasses and canals. The
nployed to defend this post, resisted,
ne whole day, the repeated attempts
ench to reduce it. In vain did Buona-
to renew, at Arcole, the scene which he
ited at Lodi. In vain did he remind
s of the glory which they had there
In vain, even, did he lead them seve-
against the bridge of Arcole; the
remained firm at their post; and
great numbers of the assailants by a
fire of grape and musket shot, kept
ut interruption.—After five Generals
n killed and wounded in this mad
and all hopes of taking the place by
d been abandoned, a division of his
ssed the Adige at a different point, and,
ade an extensive circuit, came on the
Arcole in the night, and took it with
osition.

nzy, instead of persisting in his plan
g a junction with Davidovich, impru-
rected his course to the Lower Adige,
increased the distance between them.
5th and 16th two destructive actions
ght, at Arcole, between the contending
which ended in the retreat of the Aus-
Bonifacio. Many thousands fell on
es; and Buonaparté acknowledged,

however, Alvinzy was roused from this
of torpor, by the arrival of Colonel Gra-
at his quarters, from Mantua; from whom
ceived an exact account of the state of
rrison, whose provisions would be totally
sted by the end of that month. The
ians had now 50,000 men; 25,000 of whom
with Alvinzy, in the Tyrol; 10,000 were
Padua, with Provera; and the same
er at Bassano. The French army, at this
, with all its reinforcements, did not
l 40,000 men.

t was, at length, resolved to relieve Man
nd Provera moved forward, on the 7th of
ry; and, driving th[illegible] before him,
d the banks of [illegible]
Alvinzy advanced to [illegible], and,
e two following days, forced the post-
of the French, at Corona, who fell
on Rivoli, their strongest post on the
Adige. The plans of the Austrians,
to, had been well concerted, and ably
ned. Buonaparté, deceived by their
ments, was at a loss to which quarter to
his principal force. But he was indebted
spies, or rather to the treachery of Aus-
officers, for that knowledge without
he could not possibly have defeated the
ts of his opponents. Alvinzy had fixed

the morning of the 15th for a general attack on Rivoli; and every measure, which could lead to secure success, had been carefully adopted. But Buonaparté, apprized of his intentions, was enabled to defeat them. He sent reinforcements, in the night, to the threatened point; and, early in the morning, unexpectedly attacked, and recovered, the post of St. Marco, which commanded the valley of the Adige. A most desperate conflict, however, ensued, and, though Buonaparte received reinforcements in the course of the day, he was on the point of sustaining a signal defeat, when the unaccountable neglect or treachery of the Austrian commanders, deprived them of all the advantages they had secured in the contest.

Provera, on the one side, had continued his victorious progress to the gates of Mantua, and, on the 14th, reached the suburb of St. George, which was one of the strongest positions of the blockading army, with about 5000 men; and had concerted a plan, with Wurmser, for a joint attack on the French, on the morning of the 16th. During the night of the 15th, however, Buonaparté and Massena arrived with a fresh body of troops, and reinforced the threatened posts. By this junction the French force amounted to 17,000 effective men. In every

pt, therefore, of Wurmser and Provera, to their entrenchments, proved fruitless; after a desperate resistance, Provera, ked in front and in rear, was reduced to necessity of capitulating with his whole ; and all thoughts of relieving Mantua abandoned.—That place was surrendered he French, by capitulation, on the second bruary, 1797.

Notwithstanding the many and serious committed by the Austrian generals, g this eventful and disastrous campaign, ven that grand error which pervaded all operations, the division of their force into ate bodies, it is most certain that its issue d have been very different, if Buonaparté ot obtained, by treachery, exact informa- f all their movements. By means of this as constantly enabled to direct a superior against the enemy's weak points; and to de those positions of his own which it intended to attack with additional means esistance. Hence, too, it was that he ed both at Rivoli, and at Mantua, at the moment when, but for the reinforcements h accompanied him, his troops must have defeated, and the Austrians must have d their point. The combination of cir- tances which were necessary to ensure his

triumph, amidst so many surrounding difficulties, could not be the effect of either accident or skill. They could only result from the treachery of Austrian officers, who were bribed to betray their country and their Prince. Indeed, Bonaparte was frequently heard to declare that the Austrian army cost him more money than his own. The reduction of Mantua left the French nothing to oppose in Italy. They overran, indeed, the Papal Territory; but after collecting as much plunder as they could, and exacting their own conditions from the Pope, they concluded a peace with his Holiness, who ceded to them Avignon, the Comtat Venaissin, the Duchies of Ferrara and Bologna, and the legation of Romagna; and consented to pay them a contribution of one million and a half sterling, including about two hundred thousand pounds, which had been advanced after the armistice concluded in the preceding summer.* The usual stipulation, for statues, pictures, and manuscripts, was not omitted in this treaty; and the civilized French, of the present day, appeared not less anxious to despoil Rome of

* This armistice had been afterwards broken in consequence of the refusal of the Pope to comply with the demands of the Directory, who had interpreted to him his certain terms through a Hodge, considered as an attack on his spiritual authority.

asures, than the barbarous Goths of a
age.

the brief sketch which has been given
important operations of this campaign,
t allusion has been made to the gross un-
ness of Buonaparte's reports to the Direc-
In order to give the final stamp to his
er for falsehood, and to prevent his
ts from becoming the basis of historical
ves, it will not be amiss to exhibit, in
int of view, the result of all his accounts
es sustained by the Austrians, and to
re it with an authentic statement of the
n force. From these accounts it will
d, that the amount of killed and wound-
the Austrian army, was near 50,000; and
f the prisoners, upwards of 100,000;
g a gross aggregate of 150,000 men, lost
Austrians between the period at which
ampaign opened, and the surrender of
. Now appears, from an accurate
ent, that the whole number of troops
nto Italy, by Austria, from the month of
, 1796, to the first of January, 1797, did
xceed 105,000 men;—namely,—the army
Beaulieu, at the opening of the campaign,
0; — troops brought by Wurmser, from
any, 30,000; — reinforcements sent to
inzy, in September, October, and Novem-

ber, 23,000;—troops detached from the corps of Frolich, and the armed Tyrolese, 11,000;—fresh reinforcements sent to D'Alvinzy, in December and January, 9,000. Of this number at least 16,000 died in the hospitals, and, after all the defeats which the Austrian Generals had sustained, D'Alvinzy had 50,000 men left with him, either in the Tyrol, or on the Brenta.—Hence it will appear, that the whole number which could possibly be taken or destroyed by the French, was 65,000;—a number sufficiently great, but still far short of that which the positive accounts of Buonaparte had stated it to be;—the difference between his assertions and the truth being no less than 85,000 men. The positive loss of the Austrians, during this destructive campaign, including those who died in the hospitals, was 75,000: that of the French amounted to 60,000, for Buonaparte had only 60,000 left with him at the end of January, 1797, whereas the army of the Lower Alps, under his immediate command, before the opening of the campaign, amounted to 80,000;—the troops drawn from Spain, and which joined him in March, April, and May, to 35,000;—Kellerman's army, which joined him after the peace with Saldinia, to 25,000;—subsequent reinforcements from France, at different periods, to 18,000;—and the Italian troops, &c. &c.

service, to 12,000;— making, in the 120,000 men; whence it follows, that one-half of his army in 1796; and but housand men less than the Austrians, should be remembered, lost 18,000 at alone, the garrison amounting to that at the time of its surrender.

principal cause of the defeat of the s, and the victories of the French, has igned; but it is by no means intended that the troops of the latter, on many s, displayed the most intrepid courage; their commanders manifested both skill nts. Berthier, indeed, who held the Colonel in the French army, before the ion, and who was at the head of the Italy, contributed greatly, by his dge and abilities, to the success of the —He was scarcely ever absent from Buo- who was chiefly indebted to him for ious plans, and arrangements, which ade, after the private information which treachery had communicated, and ultimately secured the triumph of his On the other hand, it should be ob- that the Austrian Generals acted under st precise and peremptory directions e Aulic council of war, who, sitting at chalked out the whole plan of the

APPENDIX A.

an address be presented to his Majesty, most humbly his royal consideration, that judgment which his faithful have formed, and now deem it their duty to declare, g the conduct of his ministers in the commencement g the progress, of the present unfortunate war. As was possible for us to doubt from what source the istresses had arisen, we have, in times of difficulty thought ourselves bound to strengthen his Majesty's nt for the protection of his subjects, by our confidence rt. But our duties, as his Majesty's councellors, and resentatives of his people, will no longer permit us le our deliberate and determined opinion, that the dis-culty, and peril, to which this country is now sub-e arisen from the misconduct of the King's ministers, kely to subsist and increase, as long as the same prin-ch have hitherto guided these ministers, shall con-tevail in the councils of Great Britain.

s painful for us to remind his Majesty of the situation inions at the beginning of the war, and of the high prosperity to which the skill and industry of his sub-under the safeguard of a free constitution, raised empire, since it can only fill his mind with the re-ecollection of prosperity abused, and of opportuni-ring permanent advantages wantonly rejected. Nor presume to wound his Majesty's benevolence by on the fortunate circumstances which might have the mediation of Great Britain between the power-, which might have ensured the permanence of our while it preserved all Europe from the calamities s since endured. A mediation which this kingdom ll fitted to carry on with vigour and dignity, by its character, and the nature of its government, hap-ed at an equal distance from the contending extremes lness and tyranny.

m this neutral and impartial system of policy his inisters were induced to depart by certain measures nch government, of which they complained as d hostile to this country. With what justice those were made, we are not now called upon to determine, not be pretended, that the measures of France were ature as to preclude the possibility of adjustment by ; and is impossible to deny, that the power which e channel of accommodation, must be the real agg-

To reject negotiation is to determine on hostilities;

but their extent was too ambiguous to conciliate use-

e beg leave farther to represent to your Majesty, that,
ent periods, your ministers have suffered the most
opportunities to escape, of obtaining an honourable
ageous pacification. They did not avail themselves,
eir duty to have done, of the unbroken strength of
confederacy which had been formed against France,
rpose of giving effect to overtures for negotiation.
the secession of several powerful states from that
, they suffered it to dissolve without an effort for
nent of general pacification. They loaded their
h the odium of having engaged it in a combination
h the most questionable and unjustifiable views, with-
themselves of that combination for procuring favour-
ns of peace. That, from this fatal neglect, the progress
has only served to establish the evils which might
ve been avoided by negotiation, but which are now
the event of the war. We have felt that the un-
d impracticable efforts to establish royalty in France,
ave only proved fatal to its unfortunate supporters.
en, with regret, the subjugation of Holland, and the
ent of the French republic; and we have to lament
in the state of Europe, not only from the successes
h, but from the formidable acquisitions of some of
owers on the side of Poland, acquisitions alarming
magnitude, but still more so from the manner in
ave been made, thus fatally learning, that the war
ome to establish the very evils for the prevention of
avowedly undertaken.
we now therefore approach his Majesty to assure
is faithful Commons heard, with the sincerest satis-
Majesty's most gracious Message, of the 8th of
wherein his majesty acquaints them, that the crisis
depending, at the commencement of the present
led to such an order of things, as would induce his
meet any disposition to negotiation on the part of
ith an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speedi-
d to conclude a general treaty of peace, whenever
ected on just and equitable terms, for himself and

from this gracious communication, they were led
speedy determination to this most disastrous con-
with surprise and sorrow, they have now reason to
at three months were suffered to elapse before any
ken towards a negotiation, or any overtures made
's servants.
equal surprise and concern they have observed,
d open conduct was so peculiarly incumbent on
ministers, considering the prejudices and sus-
their previous conduct must have excited in the

ERRATA TO VOL. IV.

Page 55, *note*, for 1791, read 1794.
—— 56, line 1, dele "to."
—— —, — 19, for "*sup*plied," read *ap*plied.
—— 63, — 4, for "Shelbane," read Shelburne.
—— 95, — 5, for "Maubenge," read Maubeuge.
—— 104, — 22, for "such declaration," read much declamation.
—— 108, — 10, for "rejected," read rejected.
—— 110, — 18, *note*, for "severity," read security.
—— 111, — 11, for "Enlgish," read English.
—— 155, — 27, for "Commons," read Lords.
—— 157, — 22, insert "of Commons," after House.
—— 201, — 5, for "daring," read damning.
—— 202, — 21, for "council," read counsel.
—— 207 — 1, for "were," read was.
—— 219, — 4 and 7, for "who," read which.
—— 242, — 4, for "state," read states.
—— 244, — 18, for "begun," read began.
—— 246, — 19, for "mistuned," read mistimed.
—— 255 — 4, for "of," read for.
—— — *note*, for 1785, read 1795.
—— 290, line 7, after "France," insert had been given.
—— 292, — 25, for "on," read in.
—— 300, last line but one, for "on," read in.
—— 301, note, *line* 3, from the bottom, for "as the people increase," read as the burdens of the people increase.
—— 303 — 11, for 'entrusted,' read contracted.
—— 349, — 1, dele "mere."
—— 362, — 10, for "successfully," read successively.
—— 466, — 14, for "mere," read more.
—— 479, — 1, for Brauton," read Braston.
—— 492, note, for "loosing," read losing.
—— 495, line 13, before "was," read losing.
—— — 15, after "opposit'n," insert *to*.
—— 518, — 9, after "allud ion," insert *had given rise*.
—— 579, — 19, for "him," ed," dele *to*.
—— — — 21, for "him," read *her*.
—— 594, — 1, for "succe read *her*.
—— 60., — 21, for "Mantding," read succeeded.
a," read Mantua.

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